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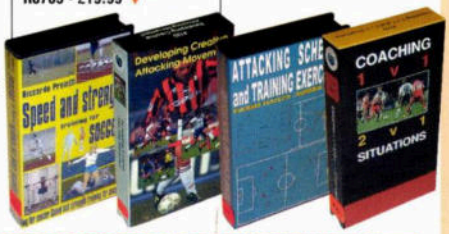

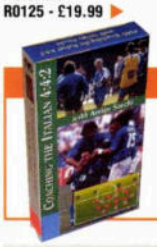

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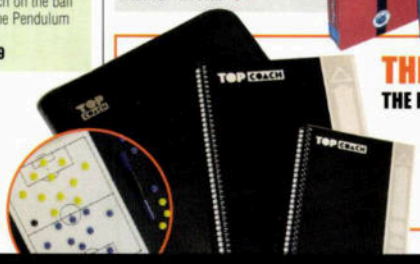

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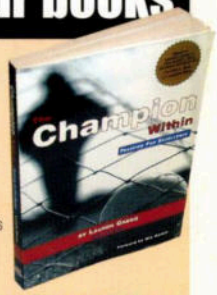

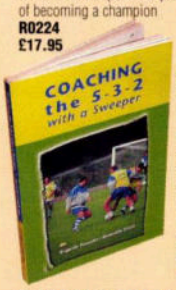

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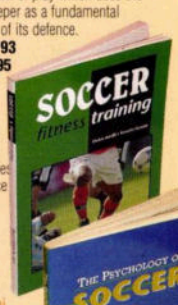

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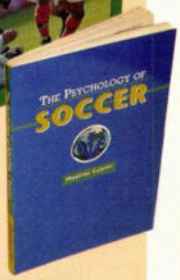

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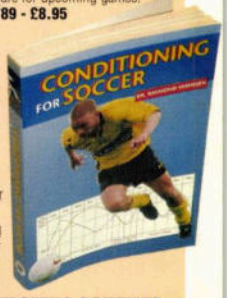

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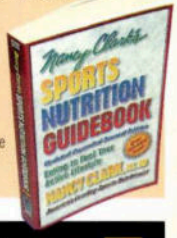

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Contents

March 2000

THE general consensus on the recent World Club Championship in Brazil was that it was better than expected, but that it could, and should, be a lot better next time.

For Latin America, the tournament was an undoubted success. For Europe, things were very different. Manchester United, who seem to be vying with Chelsea for the title of England's rudest club, won few friends in Rio for their press relations. Real Madrid's poor showing, meanwhile, only added to their mounting problems back home. We review the tournament, starting on page 16, while on page 22 we examine the crisis that has engulfed Real Madrid's season.

Also this month, we continue our countdown to Euro 2000. Our interviews have a distinctly Scandinavian feel – a reflection of the fact that Denmark, Norway and Sweden will be competing in a finals tournament together for the first time.

Next month, our coverage steps up a gear with the first of our Euro 2000 booklets. The guides are sure to be in great demand – make sure you don't miss out.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipc.co.uk)

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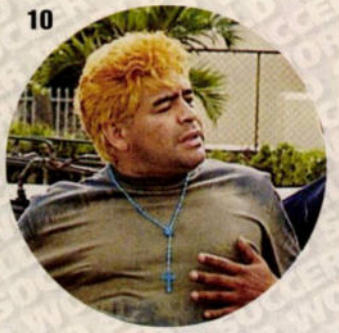

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COMMENTARY FIFA GALA IN BRU

Stage fright...much of the awards presentation was far from riveting viewing

Nice occasion, shame about the ceremony

'Nothing in the eight-year history of the FIFA awards has quite plumbed the depths we witnessed in Brussels'

FIFA'S annual World Player of the Year gala is a great occasion. The personality mix is a soccer reporter's dream, with leading players, golden oldies, the most powerful officials, multi-mobile-phoned agents and commercial predators.

This is the ultimate arena for international soccer gossiping, manipulating, manoeuvring and networking. There is only one thing wrong: the ceremony at the very heart of the celebration.

Fans and readers may find this hard to imagine. After all, how can the simple handing over of one golden bauble be turned into a muddled maelstrom of teeth-grinding ineptitude? Believe me, it can. Further, I am sad to say that nothing in the eight-year history of an ever-more-grandiose event has quite plumbed the depths we witnessed in Brussels.

I do not bring any hidden agenda to my criticism. Indeed *World Soccer*, as a member of the European Sports Magazines group that created the award and the concept, wishes the event every success and a long and happy life. That does not, however, mean we can ignore the most crucial area where the entire gravy train has spilled off the rails.

The root of the problem is, frankly, political. That is also its potential saving grace because Sepp Blatter, unassailable as FIFA president, possesses all the power he needs to ensure that future events really are – as he says he believes – all about players and not officials.

Unfortunately, Brussels was the other way round, and the future looks even more suit-encrusted.

The heart of the FIFA gala is an hour or 90-minute presentations event staged in front of the great and the good (as well as the media) in a television-adapted theatre. Any TV station that wants the show can take the pictures and sound, show the whole thing live, or select a few clips for a news programme. Most, fortunately, take up only the latter option. A handful, channels with depressingly little else to serve up, take the show live and in its entirety. By doing so this year, they have risked losing the few viewers they had.

The show had two presenters to link the award presentations, with each new category prefaced by video clips of the recipient in action.

At several previous events, notably in Italy and Portugal, the presentations have been interspersed with pop singers to appeal to a wider audience. The Belgian TV producers ignored that option. Thus the only entertainment was provided by the larger-than-life mai[illegible] Mclaine, and the stag[illegible] attempts to bring pe[illegible] not too many minutes after their cue.

To be fair, Ms Mclaine did her sparkling best to keep the ship afloat. It would have helped had she been provided with a decent script as well as with a better-rehearsed co-presenter than Hansi Muller.

He was a wonderful player nearly 20 years ago and enjoys a lucrative career as a sponsor-friendly 'professional ex-player'. But if he had delivered his passes with the speed with which he delivered his lines he would never have risen above amateur status, let alone played in World Cups and European Championships. Not really Hansi's fault; he was a good guy in the wrong role.

Nor did it end there. The problem with any presentations event is persuading the subjects of the awards to attend.

It was great to see golden oldies there such as Zico, George Best and, above all, Didi; Rivaldo also attended to collect the top award; Gabriel Batistuta rushed in an hour or so before the show, was honoured with third place and must have rushed away wondering if it had all been worth it.

Women's World Cup stars such as China's Sun Wen and Brazil's Sissi also turned out. But their presence underlined the dearth of male talent on view. Various members of the FIFA executive committee shuffled on and off stage to collect awards earned by their players. As someone said of Ricardo Teixeira, president of the Brazilian confederation: "He's picked up more awards than any of his teams."

Of course, Blatter wants to observe the diplomatic niceties. If executive members are there, then he feels obliged to show them off to the world (not a pretty sight). He also felt obliged to identify almost every other minor FIFA prizewinner.

Sorry, Sepp, it just doesn't work. I've got the solution: make the show a half-hour affair built around only the World Player award and run a video that wraps up all the other prizes. Let those presentations take place in the winners' countries before some big games. That way FIFA takes its awards out to its people.

Executive members will love this because it means they can get to the after-show banquet much earlier, thus avoiding the problems of late-night indigestion.

Blatter wants to take the show to Rio next year, I understand. In that case, he will not get any players to turn up at all. So let's see what matters most: players or politics.

Best: better than the rest

GEORGE BEST caused feathers to fly back in England with his observation that "David Beckham isn't a great. He can't kick with his left foot, he can't tackle, he doesn't head the ball and he doesn't score many goals. Apart from that he's all right."

In cold print, it does look blunt. In fact Best had a twinkle in his eye. He was a far greater player than Beckham is right now and he knew it.

Tongue in cheek...George Best

He also had his tongue in his cheek when asked about his reaction at finishing second to Eric Cantona in an internet poll to select Manchester United's player of the century.

"His kung-fu wasn't up to much," said Best, "but he was a great player for United. Come to think of it, I would happily settle for second behind, say, Pele...but not behind Eric."

Michels: why he won't write

MARCO VAN BASTEN sent his apologies. He was away somewhere, probably playing golf, his present sporting passion. His stand-in to receive the honours due to him was his national coaching mentor, Rinus Michels.

Now 71, Michels remains as enthusiastic about the game as ever; a Dutch Bobby Robson – or maybe Robson is an English Michels.

The man who created 'total football' at Ajax in the late 1960s and early 1970s is just about to celebrate publication of his latest book on the subject of team-building. "Only technical," he explained, "not autobiographical."

I asked if he had ever considered writing an autobiography. The reply was typical of the man: "No, I have never done it and I never would. There would be no challenge in it."

Whichever football issue you raise, Michels talks his way through it with cat-like sure-footedness. Whether it's testing his views on the pressures of being host nation in a major tournament, the strengths and weaknesses of a manager such as Kevin Keegan, or revealing exactly how and why he developed 'total football'. All stories for another day. If Michels considers the subjects challenging enough, that is.

Van Himst: no false modesty

PAUL VAN HIMST received due honour as Belgium's Footballer of the Century. No arguments there. The old Anderlecht hero had no serious challengers.

"Football has changed more than I could have dreamed," he recalled. "It's the tactics and the pace. When I started playing as a teenager in the 1950s the only tactic was WM. Then we got 4-2-4. Now it's five defenders. I had it much easier in my time.

"Jef Mermans was my hero. He was a great goalscorer in Belgian football. Powerful shot. Good in the air. Because of him I was only interested in goals. I had to be a goalkeeper or goalscorer – and I preferred scoring goals rather than trying to save them.

"We had a great generation, too, when we got to the European Championship Final in 1980 and the World Cup semi-finals in 1986.

Belgian great...Van Himst

"And then, of course," he mused, "we also had a good coach..."

No prizes for guessing who.

Scifo: one way to get a game

FIFA often is caricatured as a money-grabbing multinational. But, happily, it is lending more and more of its weight to charitable causes. In Africa, it has helped the World Health Organisation launch an anti-polio campaign and it continues to give high-level support for the SOS Children's Villages body.

Enzo Scifo was inducted in Brussels as the latest FIFA 'ambassador' to the organisation. He will be playing, probably, in the charity match which FIFA is planning for August 16 in Paris, when France will play a FIFA all-stars team featuring those ambassadors still up to kicking a ball around.

One good reason for bringing Scifo on board.

London to house Hall of Champions

FIFA general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen revealed in Brussels that London will be the venue for the International Hall of Champions, which the world governing body has been trying to build for the past five years.

"Six possible sites were found and we visited London and saw five of the most interesting," said Zen-Ruffinen. "I can't reveal any further details but I can say that the site which is our favourite is right in the heart of London."

I understand that means the Trocadero near Piccadilly Circus, which currently hosts the Premier League equivalent of the Hall of Champions and might be swallowed up (at a price) into the FIFA project.

FIFA needed to base it in a major city because the project must be a significant enough tourist attraction to be self-financing.

Obviously, the British government and the FA believe that helping bring it to London can do England's World Cup bid no harm... especially now that the mathematics are so tight.

Brazil hero...Didi

Didi: a poignant picture

DIDI'S appearance to be inducted into the International Hall of Champions was the most poignant.

Some of us can just remember the silky-smooth technique and the graceful, effortless delivery of passes in every direction with the inside or outside of the foot. Yet here was the same Didi, recovering from serious illness and spinal operations and walking, with great difficulty, with the aid of a stick.

This was the man who not only masterminded Brazil's midfield in the World Cup wins of 1958 and 1962 but who also had scored the first goal at Maracana back in 1950. However frail he may be physically, his memory remains as sharp as ever. He needed no prompting to talk about that historic goal.

"I played for the Carioca youth team against the Paulista youth team. After about six or seven minutes I played a one-two in the penalty area and there I was with only the goalkeeper in front of me. It was simple. We lost 3-1 but I'm pleased that nobody remembers the result, only the first goal."

Didi's own hero was the great inside-forward of that era, Zizinho. "I played in a little club, Madureira, and he played for Fluminense. I went to watch whenever I could. He was a wonderful player. But his bad fortune was to be a member of the team who lost to Uruguay in the 1950 World Cup Final. He didn't deserve that, you know."

No contest

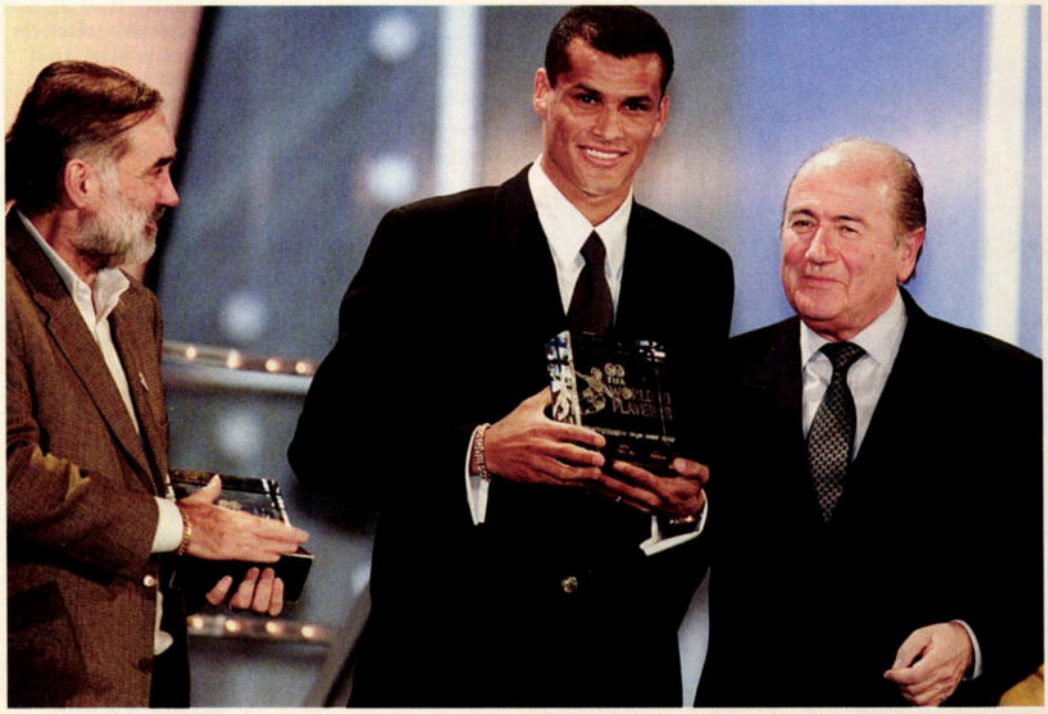
It's Rivaldo all the way in FIFA poll

RIVALDO is the world No 1. There can be no argument. He was top in the *World Soccer* reader poll; *France Football* crowned him European Footballer of the Year; and, lastly, FIFA hailed him as its own Player of the Year at the annual gala in Brussels.

No wonder Lazio had dived in, apparently, to try to tie up a transfer deal with Rivaldo before his enthronement further enhanced a transfer value already inflated to £35million.

The Brazilian stayed away from last year's FIFA awards gala in his adopted home of Barcelona, when scheduled to receive a comparatively subsidiary award as Spain's Footballer of the Year. Instead, he told organisers that if the top award was not his, then he was not interested in appearing.

This time the outcome was never in doubt. Rivaldo polled 543 points to finish a runaway winner ahead of David Beckham (England and Manchester United) on 194 points and Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina and Fiorentina) on 79.



Top dog...Rivaldo received his award from FIFA president Sepp Blatter (right), with George Best (left) looking on

Reports in Italy say that Lazio and a reluctant Barcelona have agreed the fee and that Lazio are dangling in front of Rivaldo and his agents the prospect of a lavish contract which would include huge incentives for the right to use his name to promote Cirio food products in South America. Cirio, a company owned by Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti, has extensive interests and promotional plans there.

Rivaldo's contract with Barcelona does not expire until June 2003, but it contains a clause giving the player the right to buy it out at any time if he wants to move.

In Rivaldo's case the buy-out value was set at £60m when he signed from La Coruna two and a half years ago, although a recent court ruling in Spain that arbitrarily-set values could be illegal means Barcelona will accept substantially less.

In Brussels, Rivaldo was trying to ignore all the fuss. He said: "I have never spoken with any director or president of any club. I have always said I want to stay with Barcelona and I have an ongoing contract there. The club say I am not for sale so, if they do not want to sell me and I do not want to go, that should be an end to the matter. Anyway, I have come to Brussels to talk about prizes, not contracts."

As is customary, FIFA had sought votes from the national coaches of all its 201 federations: 140 responded. Their overwhelming vote for Rivaldo underlined precisely why speculation remains rife over his delicate relationship with Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal.

The top 10 in the voting were completed by Zinedine Zidane, Christian Vieri, Luis Figo, Andrii Shevchenko, Raul Gonzalez, Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke.

Rivaldo and Batistuta were the only two South Americans in the top 10. Yorke represented the Caribbean and the Football Confederation (formerly

Second best...Beckham (left) finished behind Rivaldo but ahead of Batistuta (right)

CONCACAF) while all the other seven leading players were European.

Manchester United achieved the rare feat of having three players in the top 10 – Beckham, Yorke and Cole.

Each coach was asked for his top three, with the winner being awarded five points, the runner-up three and the third-placed player one. Rivaldo was first in 91 of the 140 votes.

European players dominated the final list of 52 players with 33 nominations. There were 11 South Americans, three from CONCACAF (Yorke, Costa Rica's Paulo Wanchope and Mexico's Cuauhtemoc Blanco), one African (Nigeria's Nwankwo Kanu), one Oceanian (Australia's Harry Kewell) and one Asian (Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata). Two women were nominated: American Michelle Akers and China's Sun Wen.

Voting by the coaches included Brazil's Wanderley Luxemburgo for Raul, Cole, Frank De Boer; England's Kevin Keegan – Rivaldo, Shevchenko, Vieri; Germany's Erich Ribbeck – Rivaldo, Juan Veron, Batistuta; Italy's Dino Zoff – Rivaldo, Shevchenko, Figo; and the USA's Bruce Arena – Rivaldo, Beckham, Vieri.

Other awards at the gala included the following: International Hall of Champions inductions – players: George Best (N Ireland), Zico and Didi (Brazil), Marco Van Basten (Holland); club: Barcelona; national team: Italy.

Team of the year (FIFA rankings): Brazil. Best mover (FIFA rankings): Slovenia. FIFA fairplay trophy: New Zealand soccer community.

Keir Radnedge

● *For full voting results, see World Service, starting page 35.*

OPINION *Tim Vickery*

United in Brazil: a bad trip made worse by ignorance

AN ILL-ADVISED and patchily prepared Manchester United stumbled through their first visit to Brazil for the World Club Championship. They were out of contention before the competition reached halfway, they fielded reserves for their last group game, and showed every sign of wishing to avoid the play-off for third place.

Off the field they were even worse. Press and public were greeted with a sneer and a scowl. Although the club launched a charity initiative with UNICEF that drew praise from FIFA chief Sepp Blatter, they went back to England having made few friends in the tropics.

Not all of the mess was of United's own making. Not unnaturally, they had turned for advice to the Rio branch of the British Council, who filled them with foolish shock-horror stories.

United were warned about Rio's terrifying murder statistics – but not told that most of the killing goes on in the far-flung suburbs. The club were advised to tell their supporters not to go to Brazil, and if they did under no circumstances were they to go to Maracana by subway – bizarre advice, because that is one of the safest places in the city.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the European champions arrived in Rio in a state of paranoia, rings carefully removed from fingers. That said, United did not help themselves. They showed a crass lack of sensitivity coupled with an obsession with defending themselves against the English media – and the outcome left Brazil bewildered.

Fans of Flamengo, Vasco da Gama's deadly rivals, were ready to take United to their hearts. They set up a joint Fla-Manchester club, with an internet home page, and printed T-shirts. They went to the airport to greet the team, and bought billboard space around Maracana, putting up a poster welcoming the club.

United used Flamengo's training facilities, a long, hot bus ride from the city centre. But when Flamengo fans went to watch United train, they found the door slammed in their face.

Pool players...Manchester United relax in Rio

This was a public relations disaster beyond repair. United planned their UNICEF event for the competition's second week. But when the tournament is up and running the media have other priorities. The PR work should have been done before the action started.

Admittedly the team's late arrival made the schedule tight – but the main reason was the desire to avoid frivolous pictures in the English press, which could create an idea that United had gone on holiday rather than play in the FA Cup. The rest of the world was baffled.

Media access to the players may be derisory in England, but in Brazil it is expected and respected. United's sneering stance played up to every age-old stereotype of colonial British arrogance. Most Brazilians were happy to see them fail on the field.

United paid the price for insularity in both their first two games. Necaxa were taken lightly – but Mexico are a growing power in the global game, as the national team have been proving.

Manager Alex Ferguson's tactics against Vasco da Gama defied belief. His plans to push back the Brazilians' full-backs were misguided in the extreme. United had little to lose and much to gain from drawing Jorginho and Gilberto forward. United gave the impression that they had not done their homework, playing right into the hands of Brazil's counter-attacking specialists. The game was going Vasco's way long before Gary Neville's two goal-yielding errors.

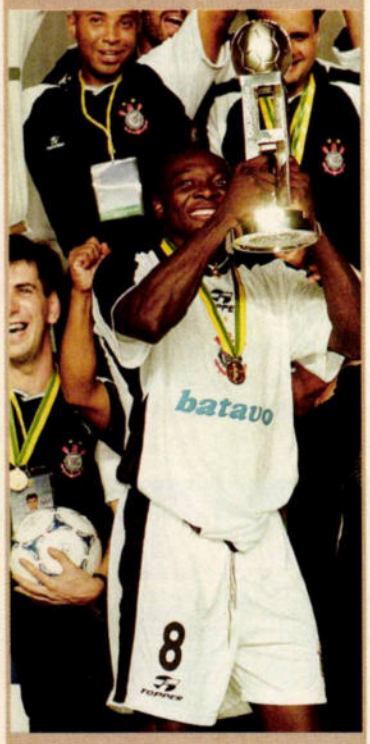
United lifted the European crown last May, getting there in the end with splendid persistence. In Brazil they blundered both on and off the field – though they showed their strength in adversity with fine second-half performances against Necaxa and Vasco.

New lessons now have to be learned, the main one being that if United want to be global players they need to broaden their horizons.

Tim Vickery is based in Rio de Janeiro and writes a twice-weekly column for Jornal dos Sports

CNN WORLD SOCCER

CLUB OF THE MONTH



TOP 10 STANDINGS

1 CORINTHIANS
2 MANCHESTER UTD
3= JUVENTUS
3= LAZIO
5 VASCO DA GAMA
6 BARCELONA
7 BAYERN MUNICH
8 REAL MADRID
9 NECAXA
10 RIVER PLATE

Donovan: American v

The USA's No 1 junior is bound for Bundesliga glory and beyond,

REINER CALMUND, Bayer Leverkusen's general manager, is thought to be one of the best judges of a footballer in Germany, which in effect means Europe.

For example, he saw something more in Emerson Ferreira than the rest of the German scouts and managers to whom the player had been touted.

"No Brazilian can make it big in Germany," Calmund was told by a know-it-all rival the day Emerson arrived. But he thought he knew better and has been marvellously vindicated by the midfielder's performances in both the Bundesliga and Champions League.

Now Calmund has turned his attention to a talent from the United States, making a remarkable swoop to sign Landon Donovan, the American youngster who was named top player at the FIFA Under-17 World Championship in New Zealand.

Donovan, says Calmund, is not the sort of player we expect to see coming from America. "He is not quite as good as Michael Owen was at the same age but has greater physical potential. He is not too physical but he has a good technique, an excellent brain and a football intelligence which can take him a long way – and hopefully that will be with us."

Some hope. If Donovan is as good as many judges in New Zealand claimed, then Leverkusen will one day sell him on to Spain, Italy or even another German club, at a vast profit. It will be comparatively easy money. After all, Leverkusen virtually cradle-snatched Donovan from school in February last year.

Of course, they were not the only interested club. No doubt that is why Donovan's mother, Donna Kenney Cash, tried hard at the time to deny that the deal had been done. She said: "They've made some offers but all Landon's options are open. There's nothing definite at all."

Maybe. Maybe not.

In July Calmund flew back to the United States and, shortly afterwards, when all the necessary paperwork had been signed and witnessed, Donovan was a Leverkusen player, albeit one with special dispensation. He was determined to play for the United States at the Under-17s tournament, and Leverkusen recognised that if they did not agree to release him then they would not even have the player to release.

Donovan is still only 17 but has been captain of the US juniors for well over a year and is not far short of a goal-a-game average in more than 40 matches for his country. His teenage career may not even have reached its climax in New Zealand. To have been acclaimed as top player was a remarkable honour considering that the trophy was carried off by an exciting Brazilian team with plenty of potential World Cup stars of their own.

Leverkusen recruit...Landon Donovan

Leverkusen and Calmund believe they have signed a bargain and say they have no intention of exerting too much pressure on Donovan, either physical or psychological. They know that they have to tread carefully. Donovan, raised in the very different American sports education system, talked of concerns that surprised Calmund and other club officials.

underkind

writes Keir Radnedge

His mother says: "Leverkusen had been interested in Donovan ever since he was voted Most Valuable Player in a tournament in Austria in August 1998. Other European clubs were interested, as well as the University of California.

"It really shocked the European clubs that we would want to consider college for Donovan ahead of professional contracts. But it's a different world. The US is into doing it one way, the rest of the world is into soccer."

Donovan made the rest of the world sit up after emerging from the Nick Bollittieri Sports Academy in Bradenton, Florida, to score a vital goal in a 4-3 victory over Argentina's juniors at the start of 1999.

He then starred in the Central and North American qualifying campaign for the World Under-17 finals. In the decisive qualifying tie with Jamaica in Montego Bay, Donovan was at his best, scoring twice in a 3-0 win. As the USA team's coach John Ellinger said: "The way he took his chances gave us the foundation to control the game."

Donovan's first goal followed a one-two with young America's other outstanding player, DaMarcus Beasley, and his second followed a similar exchange of passes with Raul Rivera.

Then came his starring role at the finals themselves, when the USA lost to Australia only on a shoot-out in the semi-finals. They also were beaten 2-0 by Ghana in the third place play-off, but Donovan's Best Player award was valuable consolation.

When it comes to home-grown superstars the American soccer public has looked long and in vain. Joe Gaetjens, who scored the historic winning goal against England at the 1950 World Cup, was a Haitian. Much later, Kyle Rote Junior, top scorer in the first season of the North American Soccer League back in the late 1960s, owed much of his fame to the gridiron reputation established by his father.

Later came a whole clutch of good but not great players, the likes of John Harkes and Eric Wynalda. Even Tab Ramos never quite hit the world stage as had been hoped, and Claudio Reyna will need to make it in Spain or Italy rather than Scotland – no disrespect to Rangers – if he is to be regarded as someone special at that rarefied level.

So maybe the mantle will fall upon Donovan. He has talent but does he have that intangible superstar flair? Bayer Leverkusen think he may. That's good news for them, and for the United States.

FINANCIAL FOOTBALL *Simon Banks*

Atlantic League takes shape

Major clubs from Europe's smaller nations want their share of TV money

THE campaign for an Atlantic League comprised of big clubs from Europe's smaller footballing nations is gathering momentum, with support coming from some unlikely sources.

That Celtic, Ajax and PSV should have promoted the idea with enthusiasm is hardly surprising. What is surprising is that the Scottish Premier League's chief executive, Roger Mitchell, also expressed support.

Mitchell and the clubs share the same motivation – fear. Last summer's aborted breakaway European Superleague was widely perceived as being driven by the top clubs seeking to maximise TV revenues; but the Atlantic League is driven by the fear that the big clubs from Europe's smaller countries will be left behind by their counterparts in the top five European TV markets: England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

Top clubs from Holland, Scotland, Sweden and Portugal compete in Europe with only a fraction of the domestic TV income that their competitors earn. Celtic chief executive Alan MacDonald recently told the club's shareholders: "In terms of the number of spectators coming through the turnstiles we are the fifth biggest club in the world, yet the money we receive is minuscule."

He pointed out that Manchester United received £10million from the Premier League last year, while Celtic received only £3.4m in revenue from their League games.

"It all comes down to TV audiences," says MacDonald. "What can you attract? Italy, Germany, France and England are all 50 million-plus in terms of audience. You then look at Spain with 35 million. Holland have 15 million, Scotland 5 million – together with Portugal, Belgium and others you get a 50 million round-up. That makes sense and has to be given consideration."

Mitchell points out that the Scottish Premier League was able to break away from the Scottish Football League only when it promised a compensation package to the clubs left behind, and he feels that the Old Firm could do the same if they were to join a more lucrative pan-European league.

It is too early to be able to say exactly what format an Atlantic League would take or whether it will run in conjunction with domestic leagues or instead of them. If it is the latter, then qualification for the Champions League probably would be offered to the clubs finishing at the top, with relegation to domestic leagues for those at the bottom.

There is some talk of the new league being a replacement for the UEFA Cup, although that looks unlikely. The UEFA Cup is currently contested by 102 clubs, but an Atlantic League would have a maximum of 20.

Whatever the format, however, it is clear that neither UEFA, FIFA nor domestic federations would sanction a competition that was outside UEFA's jurisdiction, as FIFA vice-president David Will warned recently.

The architects of last summer's European Superleague, the Milan-based consultancy Media Partners, are still challenging UEFA in the European court and are planning to revive their plans, while there is growing disquiet among the self-titled G14 group of top European clubs over the new format of the Champions League.

Europe's club competitions look sure to undergo further changes, and an Atlantic League could even be in place by the start of next season.

While that may be good news for the PSVs and Celtics of this world, it surely would be bad news for their supporters, who would be faced with trips to Lisbon and Stockholm rather than to Amsterdam and Edinburgh.

Unless they prefer to watch TV.

Simon Banks writes for Soccer Investor *(tel: 44 (0)171-329 3500)*

Maradona: drugs debacle goes on

Eric Weil in Buenos Aires reports on Diego's latest misadventures

DIEGO MARADONA and I were both holidaying at the beach in Punta del Este, Uruguay, over the New Year. In our playing days we both wore the number 10 jersey on the soccer field...but there the similarity ends.

We are still being different. Maradona had a hell of a New Year party. I didn't.

When he was rushed to hospital with high blood pressure and heart problems a day after the party, the obvious reason seemed to be an overdose of drugs and drink. When his manager and 'best friend', Guillermo Coppola hotly denied this, I knew it was true.

His circle of 'friends' in Punta del Este at the time included Argentinian 'businessman' Ferro Viera, but he left immediately after Maradona was taken to hospital.

Viera is now alleged to be the man who supplied the drugs – he has a police record linked with drugs – and a Uruguayan court put out an international arrest warrant for him.

A few days later Maradona was moved to a clinic in Buenos Aires where examinations showed that only 38 per cent of his heart was working properly due to muscle contractions caused mainly by drugs. These could be cured if he stops taking them, but would kill him if he does not.

Maradona is said to have started taking cocaine in the early 1980s, not long after arriving at Italy's Napoli. He was banned from soccer twice after positive drug tests – in Italy and at the 1994 World Cup in the USA. He would have been banned a third time after he rushed off the field, avoiding drug testing, following his last official match for Boca Juniors towards the end of 1997. The same evening he flew to a clinic in Switzerland and a drug test sample was somehow manipulated.

Under scrutiny...Maradona tackles a photographer in Buenos Aires

Recovering...Diego and his wife in Cuba

Ferro Viera said in an interview while in hiding that he and Coppola had paid doctors and provided urine samples instead of Maradona, to save him from suspension. Coppola denied this, and the Argentinian FA said it was impossible.

Two Buenos Aires clinics where Maradona stayed in January were continually surrounded by journalists, photographers – there were fights between them and security personnel – and wellwishers.

Yet a false doctor managed to enter the clinic, apparently to sell Maradona drugs, and Coppola took in several groups of journalists for paid interviews – one in the middle of the night. This prompted one headline: "How much will Coppola charge at the wake?"

This was all against doctor's orders and resulted in head doctor Carlos Alvarez giving Maradona and friends 48 hours to leave.

The big problem is that Maradona's family and friends cannot control him nor can he control himself. A previous manager, Marcos Franchi, left Maradona because he could not control him, while many believe that Coppola (who was jailed in Argentina some time ago in a case involving drugs) should break with him.

All doctors agreed, however, that Maradona had to continue his rehabilitation abroad. Canada and Cuba were considered before it was finally decided to take him to Boca Raton, Florida. However, when Coppola went to the US consulate on January 17 to get a visa for Maradona – he had previously been refused entry due to his record – it was closed due to a US holiday.

In view of the urgent need to leave the clinic, it was decided to go to Cuba – Fidel Castro, a great Maradona fan, had invited him – and he left that evening, accompanied by his wife, parents, personal doctor...and Coppola.

Maradona went to the El Quinque Clinic in Holguin, some 700km from Havana, which is said to have a 45 per cent success rate in curing drug addicts, has had several sportsmen among its patients, and charges £10,000 a month. Doctors there estimate that Maradona would have to stay for between six and eight months.

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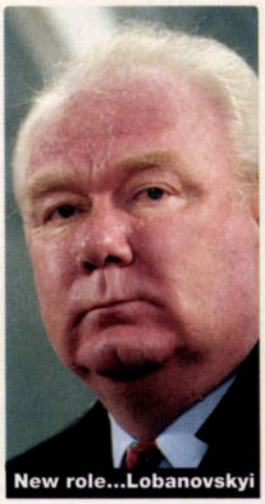
TRANSFERS

		FROM	TO
Dmitri ALENICHEV	M	Roma	Perugia
Adrian ALIAJ	M	Standard Liege	Maccabi Petach Tikva (loan)
Gabriel AMATO	F	Rangers	Gremio
Gustaf ANDERSSON	F	Vastra Frolunda	IFK Gothenburg
Steffen BAUMGART	F	Wolfsburg	Hansa Rostock
Djamel BELMADI	M	Marseille	Celta Vigo (loan)
Sven BENKEN	D	Werder Bremen	Hansa Rostock
Christian BRAND	M	Wolfsburg	Hansa Rostock
Harald BRATTBAKK	F	Celtic	FC Copenhagen
Michael BUSKENS	M	Schalke	Duisburg
Bruno CAROTTI	D	Paris Saint-Germain	Saint-Etienne (loan)
Jose Antonio CHAMOT	D	Atletico Madrid	Milan
Jean-Pierre CYPRIEN	D	Lecce	Marseille
Geert DE VLIEGER	G	Anderlecht	Willem II
Marcelo DELGADO	F	Racing Club	Boca Juniors
Mark DRAPER	M	Aston Villa	Rayo Vallecano (loan)
Antonio ESPOSITO	M	Extremadura	Grasshopper
Samuel ETO'O	F	Real Madrid	Mallorca
EVANILSON		Cruzeiro	Borussia Dortmund
Ian FERGUSON	M	Rangers	Dunfermline
Thomas GANSAUGE	D	Hansa Rostock	Arminia Bielefeld
Anthony GARDNER	D	Port Vale	Tottenham
Steve HAMPSHIRE		Chelsea	Dunfermline
Pavel HAPAL	M	Tenerife	Sparta Prague
Dirk HEINEN	G	Bayer Leverkusen	Eintracht Frankfurt
Heidar HELGUSON	F	Lillestrom	Watford
Thomas HENGEN	M	Besiktas	Wolfsburg (loan)
Mariano HERRON	M	Argentinos Juniors	Montpellier (loan)
Rick HOOGENDORP	F	RKC Waalwijk	Celta Vigo (loan)
Robert IBERTSBERGER	D	Salzburg	Venezia
Aleksandar ILIC	D	Club Brugge	Anderlecht
Sabin ILIE	F	Valencia	National Bucharest (loan)
Marius IORDACHE	D	Villarreal	National Bucharest (loan)
Tobias ISELI	M	Stuttgart	Unterhaching
Edgaras JANKAUSKAS	F	Club Brugge	Real Sociedad
Shoji JO	F	Yokohama F Marinos	Valladolid (loan)
Krunoslav JURCIC	D	Croatia Zagreb	Torino
Georg KOCH	G	Arminia Bielefeld	Kaiserslautern
Miika KOPPINEN	M	FF Jaro	Tromso
Shefki KUQI	F	HJK Helsinki	FC Jokerit
Marcus LANTZ	M	Torino	Hansa Rostock
Thorsten LEGAT	D	Stuttgart	Schalke
Kris MAMPAEY	G	Willem II	Dunfermline
Tosh McKINLAY	D	Grasshopper	Kilmarnock
Andres MENDOZA	F	Sporting Cristal	Club Brugge
Danny MILOSEVIC	G	Perth Glory	Leeds
Hidetoshi NAKATA	M	Perugia	Roma
Frode OLSEN	G	Stabaek	Sevilla (loan)
PAULO TORRES	D	Leganes	Sunderland (loan)
Cyrille POUGET	F	Le Havre	Marseille
Abder RAMDANE	M	Hansa Rostock	Freiburg
Thomas REICHENBERGER	F	Bayer Leverkusen	Eintracht Frankfurt
Jurgen RISCHE	F	Kaiserslautern	Wolfsburg
Kari RISSANEN	D	FC Mid-Jutland	FC Jokerit
Tomas ROSENKVIST	F	Vastra Frolunda	IFK Gothenburg
Cedric ROUSSEL	F	Gent	Coventry (permanent from loan)
Mikael SANDKLEF	M	Vastra Frolunda	IFK Gothenburg
Josip SIMUNIC	D	Hamburg	Hertha Berlin
Juan Pablo SORIN	D	River Plate	Cruzeiro
Massimo TAIBI	G	Manchester United	Reggina (loan)
Oleg VERETENNIKOV	F	Rotor Volgograd	Aris Salonika
Nelson VIVAS	D	Arsenal	Celta Vigo (loan)
George WEAH	F	Milan	Chelsea (loan)
Artur WICHNIAREK	F	Widzew Lodz	Arminia Bielefeld
Slawomir WOJCIECHOWSKI	M	Aarau	Bayern Munich
Walter ZEVALLOS	D	Melgar	Coventry
Marc ZIEGLER		Stuttgart	Arminia Bielefeld (loan)
Israel ZUNIGA	F	Melgar	Coventry

Lobanovskyi takes up Ukraine post


New role...Lobanovskyi

LONG-SERVING Kyiv Dynamo coach **Valerii Lobanovskyi** has agreed to take charge of the Ukraine national side. He succeeds Jozhef Szabo who resigned after his side lost to Slovenia in the Euro 2000 qualifying play-offs.

Lobanovskyi, who has recently been in hospital suffering from heart problems, led Dynamo to the Champions League semi-finals last season.

COACHES ON THE MOVE

IN SPAIN, Espanyol fired Argentinian coach **Miguel Angel Brindisi** after a dismal run of form. Second team coach Paco Flores took over as caretaker.

Lowly Serie A side Piacenza sacked **Luigi Simoni** and put his assistant Maurizio Braghin in temporary charge.

At Salzburg in Austria, **Miroslav Polak** has succeeded Hans Krankl.

Former Belgian international **Dimitri Mbuyu** has taken charge of struggling Verbroedering Geel, after the Belgian club sacked Paul Put.

Anatoly Baidachny has succeeded Vladimir Fedotov at Russian top division side Chernomorets.

Carlos Bilardo has taken charge of the Libyan national team for the 2002 World Cup qualifiers. Bilardo led Argentina to victory in the 1986 tournament.

Uruguayan **Carlos Miloc** has succeeded Benjamin Monterroso as national team manager of Guatemala.

OUT OF ACTION

PARMA defender **Stefano Torrisi** will miss the rest of the Serie A season after damaging cruciate knee ligaments. He sustained the injury when fouling Juventus's Filippo Inzaghi, an offence that earned him a red card.

Perugia keeper **Angelo Pagotto** was suspended indefinitely after testing positive for cocaine. The player has denied taking the drug.

Borussia Dortmund's **Andy Moller** was set to miss the first month of the spring programme in Germany after tearing a muscle in training.

Liverpool forward **Robbie Fowler** faces a further six weeks out of the game after his ankle injury required another operation.

Roberto Di Matteo, the Chelsea midfielder, will be sidelined for six weeks after breaking his arm in a League match against Leicester.

Former Italy international **Roberto Mancini** has announced that he will retire at the end of the season and go into coaching. The forward, with Lazio since 1997, said: "I had to decide sooner or later

and I do not want to start again with another team."

Southampton forward **David Hirst** has decided to retire after losing his battle against injury. Hirst played three times for England, scoring one goal.

In Brazil, Santos midfielder **Narciso dos Santos** has been forced to quit the game because he is suffering from leukaemia. The club have said they will meet all the costs of treatment for the 26-year-old.

OTHER NEWS

CAMEROONIAN **Issa Hayatou** won a new four-year term as president of the Confederation of African Football, after easily beating Angolan Armando Machado in a vote at a CAF congress ahead of the Nations Cup.

Barcelona forward **Luis Figo** was named Portuguese Player of the Year for the fifth time in succession in a poll of the country's leading sports journalists.

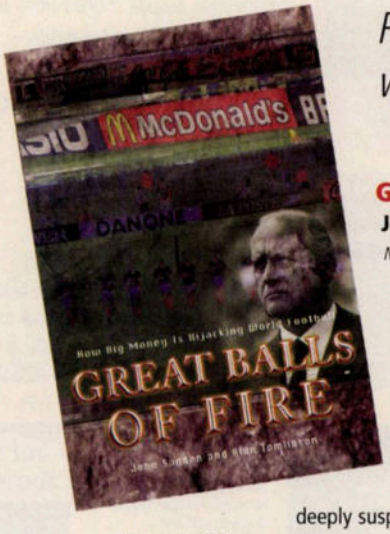
OBITUARY

FORMER Bastia wide man **Yves Mariot** has died at the age of 51. Mariot, who also played for Nancy, Sedan and Lyon, was a part of the Bastia side who reached the 1978 UEFA Cup Final, which they lost 3-0 to PSV Eindhoven. He won one cap, appearing for France against Portugal in 1975.

Top again...Luis Figo, Portugal's Player of the Year

BOOKS

Rounding up the best (and worst) in football publishing



GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson

Mainstream, £15.99

THIS is subtitled 'How big money is hijacking world football', which sums it up pretty well.

As early as the first page of the preface, the authors admit that having spent five years watching the behaviour of FIFA officials, they have "grown deeply suspicious of those who purport to speak for the good of the game".

The authors also admit to having used the services of two colleagues to convert "what was written in an academic style into something more accessible and populist". As a result, readers cannot be entirely sure whether they are reading Sugden and Tomlinson, the two assistants, Andrew Jennings and Clare Sambrook, or a combination of all four.

Let them all share the credit. They certainly deserve our thanks and appreciation for bringing out such an excellent book that grips the attention from the off and only rarely lets it go.

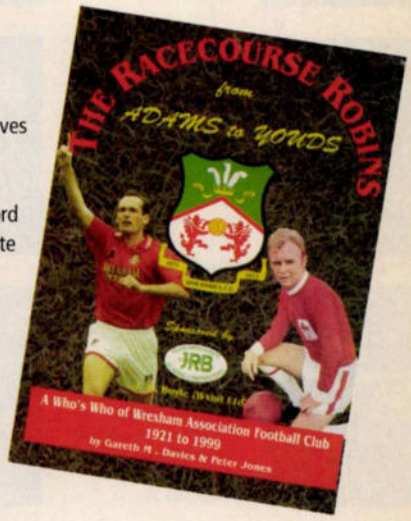
A pity about the game's future, though. It sure don't look too healthy.

David Prole

THE RACECOURSE ROBINS

Gareth M. Davies and Peter Jones

published by the authors, £23.95



THIS is a big, thick book that weighs a ton, gives biographical details (sometimes running to several hundred words) on every player to appear in Wrexham's first team, has a foreword by Joey Jones, and – lovely touch – a brief note by the late Amy Dexter, tea-lady at the Racecourse ground for 33 years.

Its 426 pages are crammed with information, so much so that no reviewer can hope to do it justice. It's a one-off and it deserves to sell every last copy.

Obtainable by calling 01407-760576.

David Prole

RED AND RAW

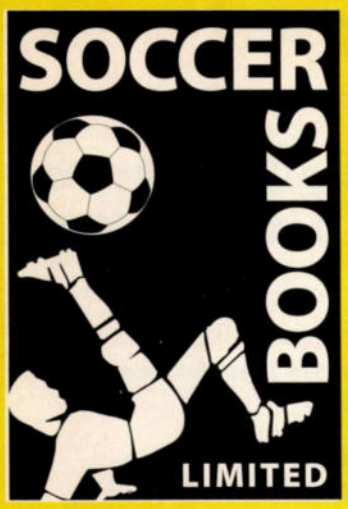
Ivan Ponting

Andre Deutsch, £9.99

LIVERPOOL versus Manchester United is now the most poisonous derby meeting in the English soccer calendar, with an atmosphere of hate so virulent that it defies any logical explanation. Ivan Ponting has dug away in his usual earnest fashion to unearth various bits of memorabilia that have been strewn over the battlefields down the years, without coming to any unusual conclusions.

Very reasonably priced, it's an entertaining book with plenty of colour illustrations. Unfortunately for the author, I'm sure that your average Red (Scouse or Manc) now loathes the other variety so much that he'll see himself dead before he forks out for a book that has anything to do with them.

Mel Duke



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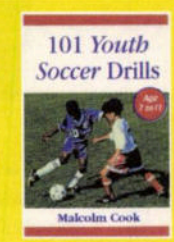

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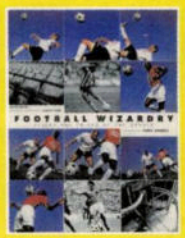

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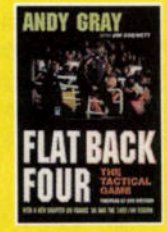

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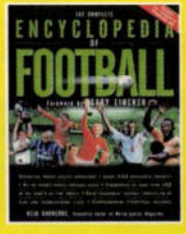

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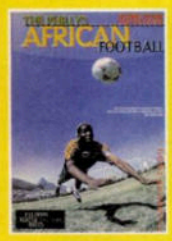

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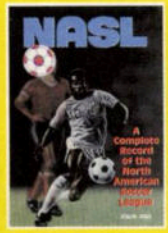

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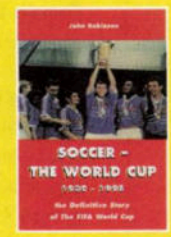

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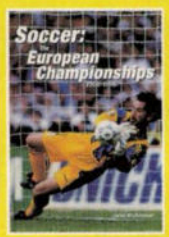

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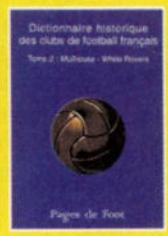

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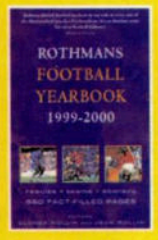

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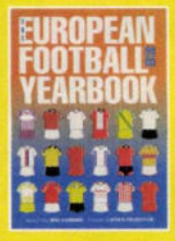

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A success, of sorts

The World Club Championship is now in the record books, but the debate over its value continues. Tim Vickery in Rio gives his verdict

A FLAWED tournament produced a flawed Final. Two tired teams, legs leadened by nerves, played out a pedestrian 120 minutes, a mere prelude to the cheap drama of the penalty shoot-out.

Vasco da Gama had played four games in nine days; Corinthians four in 10, after a year in which they had gone through 85 matches. The tournament, crammed into a week and a half, did not even allow for a semi-final stage, so the Final was between the two group winners.

Whether these two teams had the right to contest it is open to doubt. Corinthians, invited to take part in the tournament as Brazilian champions, had their passage to the Final eased by suspect refereeing and poor organisation. They won the Sao Paulo group on goal difference from Real Madrid having taken the field for the last game with the considerable advantage of knowing how many goals they had to win by to clinch top place. But their 2-0 win over Al Nassr was enough only because Fabio Luciano was credited with a goal against Raja Casablanca in Corinthians' opening game though his shot clearly did not cross the line.

Vasco's place in the competition should by rights have gone to current South American champions Palmeiras, but the Rio side were included in a bid to boost box office in their home city.

But for all its problems, this tournament deserved a better Final. Many of the world's press arrived in Brazil full of cynicism about the new competition; few left without the feeling that it had been worthwhile.

Lessons for the future

Seventy years after the first World Cup, a gathering of clubs from the various continents was long overdue. And if the first World Club Championship was far from perfect, lessons were learned from the mistakes made.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter gave a frank appraisal of the tournament on the eve of the Final. He had made a point of speaking to at least two of the players from each of the teams involved. All had been happy to participate, but some complained about the lack of time for recuperation between matches.

So any subsequent version of the tournament will have to be longer – which means that its future is dependent on an internationally agreed calendar for the world game.

In a gesture aimed at minimising the interference to the English and Spanish League programmes, only two of the 14 games were played at the weekend. The other 12 took place during the week, which, together with the early kick-off times designed for European TV, made life difficult for Brazilian supporters, who had to dash to the stadium after work.

This was one factor in the poor attendance figures for those matches not involving Brazilian teams – though, as Blatter noted, the parochialism of the Brazilian fans did not help. They have little interest in teams from other cities, let alone the likes of Al Nassr, Raja Casablanca and South Melbourne.

Blatter criticised the use of a double-header schedule, which inevitably gave some of the matches secondary importance. Every game deserved special attention, and using more stadiums would have widened the interest. He also noted that all countries with teams participating had expressed an interest in staging the next tournament. With the World Cup now such a huge undertaking, surely it would be better if the club version went to a nation from one of football's less developed continents.

"I know that this is not the best time [to hold the tournament]," said Blatter. "But the spirit of solidarity is to understand that football is not just in Europe." The point was borne out on the field, where Latin America claimed the top three slots and the teams from Asia, Africa and Oceania performed with credit.

The massacres many had predicted did not materialise. Nor did the health problems. The intense heat stopped Manchester United from playing their usual high-intensity game, but they showed their magnificent physical condition with rousing second-half displays in their first two matches.

Heat of the action...Man United's Sheringham against Vasco

"I was surprised at the quality of the games," said Blatter. "The technical merit was very high. There are no more weak teams."

Raja Casablanca and South Melbourne went home with no points, but with wonderful memories, invaluable experience and the benefits of global exposure.

After Melbourne's gutsy performance against Vasco, Ajax sent them a fax proposing a friendly. And the young Moroccan side will have learnt much from the step up in class. They also won a rave review from Real Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque. "What will stay in the memory," he said, "is the courage with which Raja faced us."

TV ratings for the tournament were good, both in Brazil and in those countries with participating teams. But the competition held out a message for those who believe that the future belongs exclusively to club football.

The difference between this and a World Cup was palpable. The die-hard club supporter was attracted by the World Club Championship; the casual follower of football was not.

Corinthians won their first international title, and there were many celebrations in Sao Paulo and among their travelling support in Maracana. But France's World Cup triumph in 1998 went much further. A nation historically with little interest in football took to the streets in an explosion of happiness. Their national team had sent out a message that went well beyond football. In a country scarred by racism, the likes of Zidane, of Arab stock, and Thuram and Desailly, of African origin, had lit a candle for a new France, tolerant and multi-racial.

Similarly, a World Cup win for Brazil sends a message of the collective potential of a flawed, individualistic society. A Corinthians victory does not.

Blatter can take heart from FIFA's inaugural World Club Championship. It was a qualified success, but did nothing to unseat the national teams as the kings of the football family.

FINAL

Jan 14 - Maracana, Rio de Janeiro
Corinthians 0
Vasco da Gama 0
Att: 73,000. **Ref:** Jol (Hol)
Aet. Corinthians 4-3 on pens
CORINTHIANS: Dida - Indio, Adilson, Vampeta (Gilmar 91), Kleber, Marcelinho, Rincon, Luizao, Edilson (Fernando Baiano 113), Ricardinho (Edu 46), Fabio Luciano.
VASCO DA GAMA: Helton - Odvan, Mauro Galvao, Amaral, Felipe (Alex Oliveira 102), Juninho (Viola 96), Ramon (Donizete 111), Edmundo, Romario, Gilberto, Paulo Miranda.

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Jan 14 - Maracana, Rio de Janeiro
Real Madrid 1 (Raul 15)
Necaxa 1 (Delgado 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Ruiz Acosta (Col)
Necaxa 4-3 on pens

The penalty kings

Corinthians sealed a historic victory from the spot, writes Brian Homewood from Maracana

CORINTHIANS won the inaugural World Club Championship by beating fellow Brazilians Vasco da Gama 4-3 on penalties in the Final.

The teams had played out a scoreless draw over 90 minutes, with golden goal extra time also failing to produce a decider.

Each side had missed one penalty when Edmundo stepped up to take the 10th shot, faced by the daunting figure of goalkeeper Dida, a specialist at saving spot-kicks.

To the disbelief of the Vasco fans, Edmundo blasted his shot well wide to make Corinthians FIFA's first official world champions at club level.

"It's very sad to miss a penalty, I'm very sorry," said the player known as the Animal. "We have to think of our supporters, who must be sad, very sad. Like us."

Vasco coach Antonio Lopes, whose team wasted the advantage of playing in their home city, said: "Everyone knows that penalties are a question of luck, where competence does not always prevail. We had enough chances to have won the game."

It was the second time in little over a year that Vasco had missed the chance to become world champions, the first coming in a 2-1 defeat by Real Madrid in the 1998 World Club Cup.

Of the tournament's eight teams, Vasco had taken it most seriously, signing former World Cup stars Romario and Jorginho to help their cause.

The clash with Corinthians, winners of the Brazilian championship for the past two years, was expected to produce a feast of football, but most neutrals were left hungry.

The game turned out to be a tense, physical and tactical battle in which both sides concentrated on cancelling out the opposition. It also torpedoed the notion that Brazilian teams do not know how to defend.

Vasco's feared Romario-Edmundo strikeforce was subdued by Corinthians, for whom Colombian captain Freddy Rincon gave another masterful performance. Similarly, Edilson and Luizao got barely a look-in against a tough Vasco defence.

The battle was symbolised by the bad-tempered duel between Edmundo and Rincon, who had several verbal and physical exchanges.

Corinthians, backed by 20,000 fans who had travelled from Sao Paulo, created a few more chances in a game that began in lively style before turning into a cagey encounter.

● In the third place play-off, Necaxa surprisingly beat Real Madrid 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

The Mexicans were again inspired by Ecuadorean captain Alex Aguinaga. He provided a superb 40-metre pass for countryman Agustin Delgado to score Necaxa's 58th-minute goal and give them a well-earned draw. Raul had given Real a 15th-minute lead.

● *Full results with line-ups in World Service, starting page 35.*

Mid-leap...Vasco's Ramon in the Final against Corinthians

Players of the tournament
Edmundo, Vasco da Gama

EDMUNDO has dominated the recent history of Vasco da Gama, even during his 18-month spell with Fiorentina. In his absence Vasco won the Libertadores Cup, yet the explosive striker remained the unquestioned idol of the fans.

Edmundo has a personality as wayward as the vital penalty he sent high and wide into the Maracana sky. When coach Antonio Lopes resumed control at the club in October 1996 he wasted no time in identifying his problem. "Edmundo tries to do everything himself," he said, "and he shouts and swears at the younger players, inhibiting their development."

A year later, though, Lopes had found a way to make sure his loose cannon was firing in the right direction. He played Edmundo further up the field, placing the emphasis on his acceleration rather than his tendency to dribble twice round the entire opposition. The striker responded with a record 29 goals as Vasco won the 1997 Brazilian championship.

However, on his return from his spell in Italy, Edmundo's talent for trouble-making proved undiminished. After a furious dressing-room row, Vasco suspended him; he then hurt a muscle, and while all the other players were locked up in a hotel, he was given freedom to roam – the Animal's nightclub antics delayed his recovery, and he was ready only just in time for the World Club Championship.

Edmundo illuminated the tournament with some wonderful moments: his chest-down and shot from a narrow angle against South Melbourne, his delightful slip past Silvestre and poke home against Manchester United. His anonymous performance in the Final, however, once more raises suspicions about his big-match temperament, which his penalty miss does nothing to dispel.

Edmundo's reaction to this latest setback will be fascinating. Can he recover his prestige? Or is it true that those whom the gods of football want to destroy, they first make miss decisive penalties?

Tim Vickery

Group A

Corinthians edge out Real

The 'goal that never was' proves crucial as Brazilians go through on goal difference

Flag day...Corinthians line up in Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium

REAL MADRID opened the first World Club Championship with a convincing 3-1 win over Asian representatives Al Nassr.

Real's much-maligned French international striker Nicolas Anelka finally scored his first goal for the club, although it was very much a freak strike. Fahad Al-Husseini equalised from a penalty but second-half goals from Raul and Brazilian Savio, also from a penalty, ensured the points for Madrid.

Anelka must have felt that the Gods were finally on his side when he scored after 22 minutes – although the 20-year-old former Arsenal striker knew little about it.

Sent through by Jose Maria Guti, Anelka was beaten to the ball by Al Nassr's Ibrahim Al-Shokia. The defender went to clear his lines but the ball struck Anelka and looped over the head of stranded goalkeeper Mohammed Khojalli.

Perhaps embarrassed by the manner of the goal, Anelka did not even bother celebrating it.

But just as Real were preparing to consider the first half a job well done, the Saudis hit back with a shock equaliser on the stroke of half-time. Christian Karembeu – who never looked happy throughout the tournament in his makeshift role in central defence – fouled Ahmed Bahja, Al Nassr's best player, and Al-Husseini converted the resultant penalty.

In the second half, however, the Spaniards recovered their poise and took a firm grip on the game. A dreadful goalkeeping bungle allowed Raul to restore their lead. Khojalli fumbled a harmless-looking cross from Cameroon wing-back Geremi towards his own net, and Raul rushed in to get the final touch.

With Al Nassr rarely showing anything other than a desire to defend in depth, it was no more than Real deserved. Anelka was also at the heart of the move that led to his side's penalty, although again it was the hapless Khojalli who conceded it by felling the Frenchman. Savio made no mistake from the spot.

Later that night, a hugely controversial goal helped Corinthians overcome African champions Raja Casablanca 2-0.

The incident came in the 68th minute when Corinthians defender Fabio Luciano fired against the underside of the crossbar following a goalmouth scramble. The ball bounced down and was cleared but referee Stefano Braschi awarded a goal. Television replays clearly showed, however, that the ball did not cross the line. Corinthians players, who did not claim a goal, seemed as surprised as anyone.

Luizao had given the Brazilian side a 50th-minute lead, sliding the ball in following a cross by Marcelinho Carioca, just as the Moroccans appeared to be defending comfortably. Raja played plenty of neat football, created several good chances, but lacked ambition.

Anelka was on target again for Real Madrid two days later against Corinthians, but Real had to settle for a 2-2 draw, leaving the group still in the balance.

A win for either side would have all but secured a place in the Final, but two goals each from Edilson and Anelka ensured honours were even.

The Frenchman opened the scoring after 19 minutes. Real Roberto Carlos fired a harmless looking free-kick into the box, but the quick-thinking Anelka diverted the ball past Dida with his heel.

Nine minutes later Edilson, totally unmarked, was set up by Luizao and fired home a cross-shot to equalise.

Edilson did even better in the 63rd minute, wriggling past two challenges before placing his shot inside Iker Casillas' near post. But

NOTES AND QUOTES

NICOLAS ANELKA was expected to be out of action for between two and three months after damaging knee ligaments in Real Madrid's match against Raja Casablanca.

Earlier Anelka had revealed that the penalty he missed against Corinthians, and which his team-mate Christian Karembeu had tried to prevent him from taking, had been the first spot-kick of his career. "I felt fine and I was convinced I was going to score," said Anelka, who was on a hat-trick. "That's why I took the penalty. I'd never taken one before for Paris Saint-Germain or Arsenal."

● Freddy Rincon was not at all concerned at scoring the goal that eliminated his old club Real from the competition.

"I did not at any moment think of eliminating Real Madrid for revenge," said Rincon, who had a frustrating spell at the Bernabeu. "These are the ironies of football. We have to learn to treat people well. If I am at Corinthians now, it is because it was my destiny. Real did me a favour in making it easy for me to leave because, with the way things were there, I am happier here."

● Before the final group matches, Real Madrid coach Vicente Del Bosque complained that Corinthians, who faced Al Nassr after Real had played Raja, would know exactly what result they needed to qualify. "The format gives a slight advantage to the team who plays second," he said.

● "With all due respect to the Moroccans, we're going to score five or six against them because we know that in the following game Al Nassr will not be able to contain Corinthians" – famous last words from Real Madrid's Roberto Carlos before his side's 3-2 win over Raja.

● "For those who said that games involving the second level team would end 10, 11 or 12-0, I repeat: there are no more weak teams in the world. I was surprised by the quality of Al Nassr, of Raja Casablanca and of those from 'down under'" – FIFA president Sepp Blatter tackles the issue of the tournament's (alleged) lack of quality teams.

GROUP A RESULTS

SAO PAULO, MORUMBI STADIUM

05.01.00 ..Real Madrid-Al Nassr 3-1

05.01.00 ..Corinthians-Raja.....2-0

07.01.00 ..Real Madrid-Corinthians..2-2

07.01.00 ..Raja-Al Nassr.....3-4

10.01.00 ..Real Madrid-Raja.....3-2

10.01.00 ..Al Nassr-Corinthians 0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Real Madrid	3	2	1	0	8	5	7
Al Nassr	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Raja Casablanca	3	0	0	3	5	9	0

Full results with line-ups in World Service, page 35

Anelka popped up seven minutes later to ensure a draw.

The Real forward's joy at rediscovering his goalscoring form was tempered by a crucial penalty miss seven minutes from time, when Corinthians keeper Dida pushed his weak shot away.

Later that day Raja became the first casualty of the tournament when they lost 4-3 to Al Nassr in a match packed with incident.

Apart from the seven goals, the clash between the group outsiders produced one sending off and a first-half pantomime when concussed Al Nassr goalkeeper Khojalli refused to be substituted – despite collapsing three times in his penalty area.

Al Nassr went ahead through Fuad Amin after four minutes but allowed Raja back on terms when Omar Nejjary's free-kick was deflected between Khojalli's legs.

Khojalli, who had been injured earlier making a brave save, was then substituted against his will and had to be frog-marched from the pitch by team-mates and officials.

Al Nassr regained command in the first six minutes of the second half when Ahmed Bahja scored one goal then created another for Fahad Al-Husseini before Raja battled back on terms with goals from Bouchaib El Moubarki and Talal – the latter a remarkable effort from all of 40 yards.

But 3-3 was as good as it got for Raja who had defender Youssef Safri dismissed in the 75th minute. Al Nassr capitalised on their extra man and had a goal disallowed before Moussa Saib headed the winner from a corner.

So Raja, with no points from two games, became the first club certain of an early flight home.

But they were to figure in one last amazing group game against Real Madrid, who despite having three players sent off, staged a stirring comeback to win 3-2 with a late goal from Geremi.

Real's Roberto Carlos and Guti and Raja's El Moubarki were all dismissed after the same second-half incident. Karembeu later became the fourth man to be sent off.

Otherwise, it was an open, flowing game in which both sides created a host of chances. Youssef Achami gave Raja a first-half lead but Fernando Hierro and Fernando Morientes replied early in the second half with two goals in a three-minute spell before Mustapha Moustaoudia equalised for Raja.

With only eight men on the field, Real would have been happy enough to draw but Geremi confounded everyone with a low drive from just outside the area two minutes from time.

The flare-up that spoiled the game came shortly after Raja's second goal. Roberto Carlos crashed into El Moubarki and was sent off; Guti kicked El Moubarki as the Moroccan was lying on the ground and was also dismissed; then El Moubarki, who had been writhing around in apparent agony, leapt to his feet, spat at Gutierrez, and was sent off and led away in tears.

Karembeu went later for a second bookable offence. Real also lost Anelka in the 37th minute when he limped off injured.

Real's victory meant that Corinthians went into the final group game knowing they had to beat Al Nassr by two clear goals to reach the Final on goal difference.

They duly achieved a 2-0 victory, but only when their captain Freddy Rincon scored with eight minutes remaining.

Both Corinthians and Real finished with seven points from three games, but the Brazilians had a goal difference of four to Real's three. Real will rightly point to Fabio Luciano's controversial second goal against Raja and claim they were hard done by.

Until Rincon struck, it seemed the under-rated Saudi side would frustrate the Brazilian champions. Corinthians had been reduced to 10 men after full-back Daniel was sent off on his debut and were being forced on to the defensive by their increasingly confident opponents.

Shortly before Rincon scored, Ahmed Bahja had come within a whisker of equalising as Corinthians struggled to master a side who defended intelligently.

Midfielder Ricardinho had put the Brazilians ahead in the 25th minute, flicking the ball between a defender's legs and driving home a left-foot shot.

Brian Homewood

Players of the tournament
Freddy Rincon, Corinthians

THERE was only one foreigner in the two Brazilian squads that fought out the Final of the World Club Championship – the veteran Colombian Freddy Rincon. But he was the undisputed man of the match.

A sense of fun has shone throughout Rincon's long career. Like a huge black cat playing with a ball of wool, he has caressed the ball through three World Cup campaigns. But the Corinthians captain had to change his characteristics in order to guide the club to their first major international title.

When Wanderley Luxemburgo took over as coach at Corinthians, Rincon was pushed further back. The logic was clear; all Brazil's other clubs were fielding a purely destructive defensive midfielder in front of their centre-backs. The giant Rincon, in addition to protecting his defence, could use his abundant ability to set up the team's attacks.

For the World Club Final, Corinthians dropped their defence deeper, with Rincon given an even more defensive role than usual. Most of Vasco's goals in the competition had come because of mistakes, and Rincon was given the job of making sure Corinthians made no costly errors. He gave a superb exhibition of defensive positioning, ensuring that Romario and Edmundo were unable to exchange passes.

Rincon still found time to supplement the attack. Indeed, Corinthians had qualified for the Final only thanks to Rincon's late goal against Al Nassr. He showed similar accuracy in the penalty shoot-out against Vasco, scoring his team's first kick.

After the disappointment of France 98, Rincon announced his retirement from international football. But with Colombia coach Javier Alvarez instilling a new mood of optimism he was coaxed back. His recall came against Argentina, when Diego Maradona was so struck by his ability that he phoned a journalist at pitchside and asked him to get Rincon's shirt.

It was a tribute from one artist of the ball to another.

Tim Vickery

Vasco cruise through after Beckham goes

United fail to recover from England star's red card

Out of order...Cabrera of Necaxa complains to David Beckham after his foul on Milian (left)

VASCO DA GAMA secured their place in the Final with three straight wins after favourites Manchester United had crashed to the Brazilians, having been held by Mexican champions Necaxa in their opening game. The Mexicans surprisingly finished group runners-up.

United got off to a terrible start when midfielder David Beckham was sent off for an awful lunge at Necaxa's Jose Milian just before half-time in the opening match. The European champions scraped a 1-1 draw, but were outplayed for much of the game by the Mexicans.

Television replays clearly showed Beckham's tackle on Milian was deliberate and malicious, though United manager Alex Ferguson, who was ejected from the dugout for his protests, implied that the Mexican players had influenced the referee's decision by complaining.

"I thought the Mexican players got him sent off," said Ferguson. "It was a fifty-fifty ball. I was disappointed."

Chilean striker Christian Montecinos gave Necaxa a 15th-minute lead when he floated a free-kick over the wall and into the top corner, but Dwight Yorke salvaged United a point when he scored from close range in the 82nd minute. Yorke's goal came two minutes after he had had a penalty saved by veteran goalkeeper Hugo Pineda.

NOTES AND QUOTES

CONTROVERSIAL director Eurico Miranda was allowed to sit on the Vasco da Gama bench despite suggestions that he was subject to a touchline ban. Miranda, who is famous in Brazil for running on to the pitch to contest refereeing decisions, was on the bench for the whole of Vasco's win over Manchester United. "It's the numbers that count," said FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper. "If Vasco want him to sit there instead of a player or a member of the coaching staff, they are perfectly within their rights."

Responding to Jordi Cruyff's comment that "if we'd played Vasco in Manchester we would have won 5-0", Miranda claimed that not a single player from United would command a place in Vasco's first team.

"Players like Beckham and Giggs have a high profile but they did not perform as they should and would not get into our team," Miranda said.

● United won few friends in Brazil, particularly from the local press, who were upset by their reluctance to open training sessions to journalists and fans. "Manchester United came here to make the most of the sun and see if our whisky is as good as theirs," said former Brazilian international Gerson. "What they did was a joke. They played rubbish."

Another columnist, Flavio Prado, took delight in United's defeat. "It was wonderful to see the English arrogance on its knees," he wrote.

● South Melbourne left Brazil pointless, but grateful for the chance to play against top-class opposition.

"We had a good look around and took it all in – this has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said coach Ange Postecoglou. "All the players will grow in stature out of this, now they've had a taste of it."

But Postecoglou found it strange playing to empty spaces in Maracana. "It was a bit of a funny feeling. You're in this huge arena, you walk out and the silence really hits you."

● Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards made his views on the tournament clear when he said: "We're here on a diplomatic mission. If they hadn't ordered us, perhaps we wouldn't be here."

GROUP B RESULTS

RIO DE JANEIRO, MARACANA STADIUM

06.01.00 ...Man Utd-Necaxa.....1-1

06.01.00 ...Vasco-Sth Melbourne 2-0

08.01.00 ...Man Utd-Vasco da Gama ..1-3

08.01.00 ...Sth Melbourne-Necaxa.....1-3

11.01.00 ...Man Utd-Sth Melbourne ...2-0

11.01.00 ...Necaxa-Vasco da Gama....1-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vasco da Gama	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Necaxa	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Manchester Utd	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
South Melbourne	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

Full results with line-ups in World Service, page 35

Necaxa, who surprised United with neat passing and solid defending, also missed a penalty, when Ecuador's Alex Aguinaga had his effort well saved by Mark Bosnich.

In the second match of a double bill, a packed Maracana saw Edmundo score a brilliant goal as Vasco overcame South Melbourne 2-0.

Edmundo collected a long pass on his chest, slipped past a defender and fired home from a sharp angle. Earlier, midfielder Felipe had broken Melbourne's stubborn resistance by scoring with a tremendous 30-yard shot in the 53rd minute.

Until then, the 500-1 outsiders from Oceania had held out well while Edmundo and new striking partner Romario struggled to establish a relationship. The two exchanged only a couple of passes but earned the biggest cheer of the evening when they gave each other a friendly slap after Romario had missed a chance set up by Edmundo.

Two days later, in the decisive match of the group, Manchester United came up against a brilliant Vasco, who ripped them apart with three goals in the first half.

United, without the suspended Beckham, collapsed alarmingly in the face of the onslaught. Worst of all, they contributed to their own demise by aiding and abetting the two opening goals. Gary Neville handed the Brazilians the initiative after 24 minutes with an inept pass which found Edmundo, who teed-up Romario to finish with aplomb. Incredibly, United pressed the self-destruct button again less than two minutes later. And again it was England international Neville who was at fault, allowing the ball to bounce off his chest and into the path of Romario, who scored.

Edmundo added a brilliant third as he flicked the ball over a shoulder, beat Mickael Silvestre and hammered home past the despairing Bosnich to the joy of the home crowd of 52,000.

But there was controversy with the two opening goals, because the assistant referee raised his flag for offside, and then lowered it, on both occasions. It could have been worse for United, but Bosnich denied Felipe with a fine save just before Edmundo's goal.

United staged a revival in the second half, scoring through Nicky Butt, while Yorke also missed a penalty, but defeat meant they could not reach the Final.

In the second game that night, Necaxa beat South Melbourne to ensure that the group went down to the wire. The Mexicans won an entertaining clash which deserved to be seen by more than a tiny crowd in Maracana. Melbourne refused to accept their role as whipping boys, and Necaxa needed two penalties to end the resistance. Montecinos put Necaxa ahead from the spot after 19 minutes and Agustin Delgado made it 2-0 on the half-hour.

John Anastasiadis put battling Melbourne back in the frame just before half-time with their first goal of the tournament, and it needed another penalty, this one converted by Salvador Cabrera, 11 minutes from time, to make the game safe for Necaxa.

Manchester United fielded a reserve team for their final match, on yet another stifling evening, in which they beat South Melbourne 2-0.

Quinton Fortune scored in the eighth and 20th minutes. After that United, for whom left-back Danny Higginbotham was the most impressive, eased up before briefly looking interested again in the last few minutes.

The Australians nearly scored when Vaughan Coveny's shot hit both posts before bouncing to safety. Beckham appeared as a substitute for the last 15 minutes and was booed resoundingly at every touch.

In the night's second match, Vasco secured their place in the Final thanks to Romario, who scored his third goal of the tournament to earn his side a 2-1 win over Necaxa. He atoned for two earlier glaring misses by scoring the 69th-minute winner of a dramatic, high-quality match, in which both sides created a host of chances.

Vasco, who needed only a draw to qualify, sprung the first surprise by leaving out Edmundo. Within five minutes, Necaxa stunned the home crowd when Aguinaga slotted the ball home after a quick exchange of passes had sliced open Vasco's defence.

The Mexicans enjoyed their lead for only seven minutes before defender Odvan, who had just gone on for the injured Junior Baiano, headed the equaliser from a corner.

Brian Homewood

Players of the tournament
Alex Aguinaga, Necaxa

ONE of the most positive aspects of the World Club Championship was the opportunity it presented for little-known teams and players to gain a global audience.

So it was fitting that the world was finally let in on a secret which for years had been known only in Latin America: for over a decade Necaxa's Alex Aguinaga has been a class act for both club and country.

Had he been born in Brazil or Argentina then his worldwide reputation would be immense. But with his native Ecuador never having qualified for a World Cup and Mexican club football having little international projection, Aguinaga remained a virtual unknown.

Pale, podgy and pony-tailed, he looks a most unlikely South American football star – until he touches the ball and the range of his passing and dribbling skills is revealed.

He is now 31, and had seemed a spent force in last year's Copa America. But the freezing Paraguayan winter was not to his liking. In Brazil he drank in inspiration from the rays of the sun.

He was well aware that the tournament would go some way towards making up for all those World Cups he had missed, cast off all the doubts that were surrounding his fitness, and gloriously emerged as one of the stars of the tournament. He did more than anyone to ensure Necaxa's surprise third place.

In Rio, Aguinaga gave a nine-day resumé of the skills that have made him the most valuable foreigner in Mexican football. He was always a danger with his shots and feints, dribbles and passes.

Now that Aguinaga has tasted the fruits of fame, it will be interesting to see how he copes with the return to the obscurity that his talent so clearly does not deserve.

He will be approaching 34 when the next World Cup kicks off. Leading out Ecuador for their first game at football's highest level would be the crowning glory of a magnificent career.

Tim Vickery

Clouding over...Bernabeu stadium has witnessed a season of turmoil

Bernabeu blues

Real Madrid's most disruptive dressing-room malcontent has decamped to Inter, while Steve McManaman is playing well after an enforced injury lay-off. But the club's long-term problems run deep, argues Gavin Hamilton

THE SCENARIO is a familiar one at struggling clubs across Europe. A new coach arrives as a mid-season saviour to turn things around. He spends a few weeks getting to know the players before recommending who will stay and who will go.

During the summer officials scurry around the Continent wheeling and dealing to provide the coach with the squad he so desires. The club, with new signings in place, and with beaming coach fully in control, start the new season with renewed confidence and vigour.

Not so in Madrid, where seven-times European champions Real have turned scapegoating and backstabbing into an art form.

John Toshack – like his immediate predecessors Guus Hiddink, Jose Antonio Camacho and Jupp Heynckes – discovered recently that nobody crosses swords with Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz and lives to tell the tale.

The Welshman returned for a second stint at the Bernabeu last year in place of Hiddink, who had paid the price for a lack of discipline, both in defence and the dressing-room. Toshack quickly identified the defensive frailties and told Sanz that he needed a new goalkeeper and centre-back. He suggested Espanyol's young Argentine defender Mauricio Pochettino as a long-term replacement for Fernando Hierro.

Sanz ignored his coach's advice, choosing instead to extend the contracts of Hierro and German goalkeeper Bodo Illgner and then pay a Spanish record £23million for one of the world's most troublesome strikers, Nicolas Anelka.

Thus the problems that had beset his predecessors – a leaky defence, stroppy players and a president seemingly incapable of backing his coach – threatened to derail Toshack before the season had started.

Real's defensive weaknesses were exposed early on when a back injury to Illgner led Toshack to play the promising but inexperienced Iker Casillas in goal. When the teenager struggled, Real turned to young Argentine Albano Bizarri, who was even worse than Casillas.

By now, the leaks were not just springing from Real's defence. In Spain's four quote-happy daily sports papers, there were claims that dressing-room 'elder statesmen' Hierro, Fernando Redondo and Raul were not happy with Toshack, and were whispering as much in Sanz's ear.

For Toshack, the game was nearly up. But with a large pay-off in the pipeline, he would not jump. He would have to be pushed.

After Bizarri blunders had handed Rayo Vallecano a 2-0 lead in a November League match, before Real scrambled back to win 3-2, Toshack had, not unreasonably, commented: "We're in trouble if our defence and keeper keep making mistakes."

But Sanz was incensed at his coach's lack of diplomacy. Toshack, in 'sack-me-if-you-dare' mode, responded: "It's my right [to speak out] as the person in charge of the team. I'm the one that has the authority. I'm not going to allow my authority to be taken away because after that there's nothing left.

"There's more chance of seeing a pig flying over the Bernabeu than me changing," he added.

(continued on page 24)

Madrid and me, by Macca

Steve McManaman is now over halfway through his first season with Real Madrid, following his transfer from Liverpool. He talks exclusively about his new life to Ian Whittell

WORLD SOCCER: How have you settled into life in Madrid?
STEVE McMANAMAN: Really well. It is a fantastic city, and I like the lifestyle. The pace of life is so relaxed, and I seem to fit in really easily. Obviously, when you move to a new country there is always a certain sense of doubt if you are doing the right thing, but apart from missing my family, I haven't felt homesick at all.

Does that surprise you?
Not really. I always had the idea that I would move abroad at some stage of my career, so I had almost got used to the idea before I finally came to Spain. In saying that, though, I have a strong affinity with Liverpool and I suppose I thought it would take me a little longer to settle in than it actually has. It's great here, and so far I've loved everything about Madrid.

Even the team's performances?
True, we didn't have the best of times before Christmas, but that was probably to be expected a little, after losing the manager [John Toshack]. The strange thing is, even when we have lost games, we have played well, sometimes battered teams, and then somehow had the game sneaked away from us at the end. I think it must be something to do with the mentality of the club. Madrid must attack, and they must entertain at all costs – and sometimes it costs us.

So are Real Madrid in crisis?
Hardly. There was an unhappy spell before Christmas, but our League position is not that bad. We have a couple of games in hand over the leaders, and if we win them, then we could be right up there, only a couple of points off the lead. We do have to win them, but we are capable of doing that, because this is a fantastically talented team. There's no question of a crisis. What we probably need, though, is a bit more consistency, and we will be at the right end of the table. Don't forget, either, that we are still doing pretty well in the Champions League.

In England, there is a perception that as Real Madrid aren't doing too well, then you can't be doing that well either. Is that the case?
No, not at all. I'm pretty happy with the way it has gone for me on the field since I arrived. I settled into the side very quickly, scored a couple of goals and seemed to be accepted by the fans. It's strange, but I haven't been on the losing side for Madrid yet. The games we lost came when I was injured. Some of the press over here have made a bit of a deal about it, saying I'm a talisman, but I wouldn't go as far as to say that. If there has been one thing that has gone wrong for me, it was the thigh injury. That kept me out for a long time, and it was very frustrating. I was happy with my form, and then that injury was a major setback. I'm only just back playing again after more than two months out, and I'm still feeling my way a little. But with a bit of luck that is behind me now, and I can pick up where I left off.

You came back from injury and then went straight to Brazil for the World Club Championship. What was that like?
Hot! The heat and humidity were incredible. Against Necaxa it was almost impossible to breathe. I think that Spanish and British TV wanted the kick-off times to suit their schedules, and that meant we were playing in some of the worst heat of the day. But I still enjoyed it.

There seems to have been a bit of a reaction back home because Real did not do too well in Brazil.
Yes. The fans here expect us to win, and they let us know about it when they think we have let them down. We were a bit unlucky not to have done better. We drew with Corinthians, and should have won. That would have meant we would be in the Final, which would have made the tournament a little more interesting.

You missed a penalty in the third place shoot-out...
Er, yes. No excuses. I didn't even hit the target, but then a shoot-out is a bit of a lottery. The funny thing is, we practised penalties in training the day before, and I didn't miss one.

Was it a blow for you to lose John Toshack as manager so early in your career at Madrid?
I don't think you can expect any manager to stay around too long at this club. So I didn't come here thinking that I would just have John Toshack as my manager, nobody else. In saying that, I got on really well with him, and I liked him a lot. He was very good to me, and he helped me to settle in well, so it was a shame to see him go. But the new gaffer [Vicente Del Bosque] has done a great job in settling things down.

Quick to settle...Steve McManaman

It has been suggested that the medical facilities at the club are not that good. Do you feel that?
Not really. When I was injured, I got great treatment, and I was happy with the facilities. I only know Liverpool and Madrid, so I've not got anything to compare them with, but they seem pretty good to me.

What are your ambitions this season?
To get fully fit for a start and then go on and win something. I came here because I wanted to take my career on and Real offered me the chance to play in the Champions League. We are still in the competition, and well placed to reach the quarter-finals, so that is a really exciting prospect for me. We could be in a decent position in the League if we win our games in hand and are still in the Cup here, too; so there are plenty of trophies to go for.

Do you believe Madrid can win anything after all the turmoil?
Why not? There are some fantastic players here who have done it at the highest level, like Hierro, who is a great leader, and Raul, an awesome talent. The experience and the ability is there, so I can say that we can still do well this season.

Brushing shoulders...Lorenzo Sanz (right) with IOC chief Juan Antonio Samaranch

Guilty...the Spanish media has blamed Sanz for the trouble at the club

Toshack's inevitable sacking, and replacement by Vicente Del Bosque, failed to stem the tide of poor results. The lowpoint came at home to Zaragoza on December 4. The 5-1 humiliation revived memories of 25 years earlier, when a Johan Cruyff-inspired Barcelona had won 5-0 in Madrid, Real's worst ever home defeat.

Sanz left the stadium 10 minutes into the second half, complaining of a stomach upset. The remaining directors exited to a torrent of abuse, while the departing team bus was pelted with missiles.

January's World Club Championship was expected to provide brief respite from the mounting problems back home. But Real could – and should – have done better. They finished only fourth and also had three players sent off in the group game against Raja Casablanca – Roberto Carlos, Guti and Christian Karembeu. Nicolas Anelka scored his first goals for the club, but then missed a crucial penalty against Corinthians and suffered a knee injury which is expected to keep him out of action until the end of March.

Since their return from Brazil, there have been signs of a mini-revival. Real are still in the Spanish Cup (thanks to a 0-0 draw at Zaragoza), and in the League a win against Betis extended their unbeaten run to six games and took Real up to seventh. They are also still on course in the Champions League.

But many of the long-term problems remain. The club's debt is estimated to be in the region of £150m. A new TV deal worth nearly £50m a season will go some way to reducing this, but the spendthrift ways of Sanz have come under severe criticism.

Real's injury jinx continues. No sooner had Steve McManaman returned to full fitness than Anelka and then Savio were struck down. Bosnian Elvir Baljic, a £10m summer signing, remains on the long-term casualty list.

In the recent Spanish Cup matches, for which the big teams field reserve teams, Barcelona gave run-outs to Pep Guardiola, Luis Enrique, Sergi, Ruud Hesp and Frank De Boer. Real fielded Dorado, Sanchis, Karanka and Ognjenovic.

Clarence Seedorf is the latest troublemaker to be shown the door (after Christian Panucci, Davor Suker and Predrag Mijatovic). But the two Fernandos, Hierro and Redondo – dubbed a "cancer at the heart of the dressing-room" by one journalist – remain. They appear to be more influential than ever.

Del Bosque is expected to see out the season, although Sanz's number one target, national coach Camacho, may be available sooner rather than later. Celta Vigo's young manager Victor Fernandez and ex-Lazio and Roma boss Zdenek Zeman have also been mentioned.

Argentine Jorge Valdano was approached with a view to becoming general manager, but he declined. He was the first casualty of Lorenzo Sanz's reign at Real, being sacked by the newly-arrived president in January 1996.

Valdano, more than anybody, knows that at Real if the defence and the egos don't get you, the president probably will.

Real coaches under Sanz

Jorge Valdano	Sept 1994-Jan 1996
Arsenio Iglesias	Jan 1996-summer 1996
Fabio Capello	Sept 1996-summer 1997
Jupp Heynckes	summer 1997-June 1998
Jose Antonio Camacho	July 1998
Guus Hiddink	Sept 1998-Feb 1999
John Toshack	Feb 1999-Nov 1999
Vicente Del Bosque	Nov 1999-present

Off day...Guti (left) and Roberto Carlos after their dismissals in Brazil

'I'm not a troublemaker'

Clarence Seedorf has now left Real Madrid to join Internazionale. In this exclusive interview, he tells Dominique Antognoni about the move and about his hopes for his career in Italy

WORLD SOCCER: Are you happy to be at Inter, or is it more a question of feeling sad that you had to leave Real Madrid?
CLARENCE SEEDORF: I'm not sad at having had to leave Real. Everyone knows that I've always loved Real, and I refused all other offers, even one from Inter six months ago. I leave feeling slightly bitter, but on the other hand I feel proud to be going to another truly great club, to play with Ronaldo and Vieri, and to work with Lippi. He's a great coach, and that's what I found was lacking at Madrid recently.

Why did you leave Madrid?
In the last few months I felt they had no confidence in me. I was keen to stay – I love the fans, the city, the people and the club, but the coaches [John Toshack and then Vicente Del Bosque] no longer thought of me as an important player. In the end, by my going to Inter, we've all gained. Real needed the money and have got it now; I wanted to play, and here I am at Inter.

Why this club?
They'd been approaching me in earnest, and they have paid me millions – which means they really want me. Juve and Lazio were interested but Inter moved fastest. They are a club with tremendous ambitions. I wanted to work with Lippi – I've always said he is one of the most impressive trainers around. He had tried to get me when I was still at Juve. He told me he wanted to build an Inter team as good as his Juve had been, and he gave a really inspiring talk. I remember Van Gaal and Capello too – all of them had the willpower and the personality to push you to victory.

But didn't Capello want to keep hold of you?
Yes, I have a great rapport with him. I made my greatest improvements under him. But I wanted to go to Inter. I really, really wanted to play alongside Ronaldo – he's the sort of player I understand and relate to. And then there's Vieri – the strongest player in the Italian League. My game can adapt to these two phenomenal players. So often in the past few months I've imagined playing behind them. I love to take players on and can pass quickly – and they would be up front, creating marvels.

You've started very well, with a wonderful goal in your debut. Why did you cry after scoring?
I live through my emotions. And it was a very special moment, my debut, after a dispiriting year. The last time I'd cried was that night in Amsterdam when we won the Champions League. It was so wonderful.

It must have felt great to have decided your first Milan derby.
After the goal I went to the bench and hugged everybody. It was my way of saying thank you. I'd only been at Inter a few days and they'd made me feel so welcome.

What are Inter like as a team?
They've been reborn – they have now taken the final step to becoming a truly great squad. They have so much going for them. The only thing missing is consistency, but that will come.

What is your true role going to be, ultimately?
I am a playmaker. It's said that a playmaker has to use his intelligence to figure out when and how to pass, but I go a lot on instinct. I have to feel it's right when I pass. You have to know how to blend intuition with reason without losing any pace. It's a role that blends lots of hard work with imagination.

Is it easier to play in Italy now or was it easier four years ago?
It's easier for me now, because I speak the language. That doesn't sound like such a big deal, but playing in Italy means talking about football and listening to what is said about it.

You have been said to cause coaches problems.
No, that's not true – you only have to ask anyone who has ever trained me. I am always ready to play in whatever position the coach tells me to. Just ask Van Gaal, Hiddink, Capello. They had faith in me, they knew me very well and they know my ability to knuckle down.

What about Toshack?
Oh no! I was the only player who didn't argue back, not even when I felt that Toshack didn't appreciate my playing style.

Central figure...Clarence Seedorf

So, you're saying you're not a rebel.
That's right – I'm not. I can accept decisions I don't like, even when I'm left out of the side.

So if you were left out at Inter...?
All I'll say is that at Inter nobody gets any guarantees. The technical quality is so good that you have to play every game as though it were a crucial event. There really is no side in the world like Inter at the moment.

What are the differences between Spanish and Italian football?
What has struck me most here is the will to win and the physical fitness. That and the fact that it's even colder here in winter.

The will to win – that's you all over, isn't it?
I reject the whole idea of losing. I've won many times but that still isn't enough. You never win if you're just thinking about the past.

You will have to shoulder a great deal of responsibility on the pitch.
That's fine – I won't shy away from it. I have chosen to come here at a difficult time for me and for Inter, and that sort of situation tends to fire me up.

Inter seem to see you as a saviour – you're even being spoken of as the new Matthaus, someone who can pull the side together.
I would be happy to be seen in that way. At 23, I feel very proud to be compared to the legendary Lothar.

Back at Bordeaux...Christophe Dugarry

Marseille in the mire

All is not well in Provence. Nick Bidwell reports on a season that has gone from bad to disastrous for OM

PRESENT-DAY players, managers and directors at under-achieving Olympique Marseille should be able to relate to Robert Domergue, an OM coach in the 1970s who was known to pack a gun in order to dissuade angry supporters from attacking him following defeats for his team at the Stade Velodrome.

After all, such has been the violent reaction from Marseille supporters to their club's mediocre form in the French championship this term – at the winter break they were a poor 10th and just four points above the relegation zone – that certain high-profile club employees might be tempted to follow the gun law example of Marshal Domergue.

All season long, the *Marseillais*' fan-base has been a tinder box, with fans regularly venting their spleen about the side's lack of commitment, the tactical eccentricities of coach Rolland Courbis and the board's failure to uphold the OM tradition of packing the team with star names. But if anyone thought a truce would be called in the wake of Courbis's resignation in late November and his replacement by popular ex-Marseille defender turned club youth team boss Bernard Casoni, they were to be sadly disappointed.

In fact, the atmosphere was to turn even uglier. The day after a 5-1 thumping at Saint-Etienne – where OM followers had 'distinguished' themselves by clashing with home fans and police before heading for the exits at half-time with their team 4-0 down – retribution was in the Provencal air. A mob descended on the Marseille training ground, where they vandalised a number of players' cars, shouted insults and jostled their favourite scapegoats, keeper Stephane Porato, former Blackburn left-back Sebastian Perez and French international forwards Robert Pires and Christophe Dugarry.

Nor would there be any let-up in the campaign of hate when lowly-placed Lens arrived at the Velodrome seven days later. Banners bearing such legends as "You only deserve our contempt" and "We come for Marseille. Not for franc-filled mercenaries" established a sour, aggressive atmosphere, while supporters subjected the team to a torrent of mockery and abuse. A totally dispirited OM duly lost 2-1 to a Lens side reduced to 10 men for half the game.

With post-match clashes between riot police and Marseille fans providing an apt end to a night of unmitigated rancour, the fall-out from the divorce of club and followers could be raked over in earnest.

"When you have a team playing badly and supporters who have become overtly hostile, it is a catastrophic scenario, a complete disaster," admitted OM executive president Yves Marchand after the Lens debacle. "Marseille is one of the great football cities in Europe and when OM loses, the entire place falls ill.

"I understand the fans' frustration. We were runners-up in both the French championship and UEFA Cup last season and now we are in mid-table and struggling to qualify for the last eight of the Champions League, after starting the second phase with defeats against Lazio and Feyenoord.

"But the supporters have to show a more constructive attitude. If they constantly whistle and jeer, they make it so difficult for the players

Goner...Rolland Courbis

to perform to any sort of respectable standard, while those who go in for violent acts only please all those detractors of OM who love to see us suffer.

"Obviously, the time has come to make changes to our first team. Some will be allowed to leave and in their place we will bring in players with strong characters who can deal with the pressure and expectations which are part of life at OM. We have to start from scratch, rediscover a warrior spirit and strive to qualify for another Champions League by at least finishing third in the French championship."

The hoped-for renaissance may prove a long process, however. Indeed, the mid-season shake-up of personnel looks to have weakened rather than strengthened the OM hand. Their attacking options look particularly thin now that an angry Christophe Dugarry has returned to former club Bordeaux and Fabrizio Ravanelli has moved on to Lazio, while an incoming cavalry featuring unwanted Newcastle sweeper Franck Dumas, Lecce central defender Jean-Pierre Cyprien, Paris Saint-Germain reserve winger Jerome Leroy and Le Havre striker Cyrille Pouget is hardly the stuff to set pulses racing.

Unfortunately, a forward line wish-list of George Weah, Alen Boksic, Mustapha Hadji and Alvaro Recoba turned out to be fantasy.

'The arrival of Franck Dumas, Jean-Pierre Cyprien, Jerome Leroy and Cyrille Pouget is hardly the stuff to set pulses racing'

At least French international attacking midfielder Robert Pires has surprised all and sundry by opting to stay put. But for how long? Over the past few months he has lost all form, become a whipping boy for his home crowd and has been stripped of the club captaincy in favour of full-back Patrick Blondeau. A move to one of the many top European sides interested in him (Arsenal, Milan and Paris Saint-Germain, among others) must be a tempting proposition.

So how have Marseille ended up in this mess? Contributory factors include the poisonous atmosphere created by the long-running spat between Yves Marchand and Rolland Courbis, the latter's constant switches of playing systems, the team's less than perfect physical conditioning and bad judgment in the transfer market – highly-experienced sweeper Laurent Blanc was never adequately replaced following his move to Internazionale last summer, for example, and of the 10 new recruits brought in during the close season, only young midfielder Stephane Dalmat has made any impact.

But whatever the reasons for Marseille's eclipse, an immediate upturn in fortunes is far from guaranteed. It is serious enough that rookie coach Bernard Casoni has to contend with a traumatised squad. But even if Casoni succeeds against the odds to engineer a revival, Marseille's financial and legal problems threaten to throw a spanner in the works at any moment.

The back-office picture is not a pretty sight. OM made losses of £5.22million last season and worse figures are expected for the current campaign; bonuses have not been paid to players over the last few months and, to cap it all, the fraud squad is now investigating alleged 'bungs' during transfer deals over the period 1997-1999.

A change of ownership at the club could also be on the horizon, with much-criticised president and Adidas boss Robert Louis-Dreyfus deciding he does not need the aggravation and walking away. Despite investing £55m since becoming Marseille's sole shareholder in 1997, Louis-Dreyfus has yet to see his team win any trophies, and the word is that he has been negotiating with French TV company TF1 to take over from him as the club's principal benefactor.

OM's volatile fans can only hope a substantial injection of media cash boosts their club's ratings.

Headed for home...Fabrizio Ravanelli has swapped Marseille for Lazio

The men who matter

Rene Henriksen

Jim Holden on Denmark's latecomer to the international scene

RENE HENRIKSEN is living proof that life can begin at 30 for a footballer. After years as an anonymous part-timer in lower division soccer in Denmark, the elegant central defender has suddenly blossomed into a classy international player.

Indeed, Henriksen is now one of the rocks of the team that will go to Euro 2000, having made a belated debut with the national side at the age of 28.

He has also been impressing at club level. He was voted Player of the Year in 1999 after helping the unsung Akademisk Boldklub (AB) team to win the Danish Cup and challenge for the League title. Now he is flourishing after a surprise transfer to Panathinaikos in Greece.

Henriksen adapted instantly to the passion play that is Greek football, and it has brought still further improvement in his defensive skills.

"I wondered what I would find," the player admits, "but I haven't regretted the move for a minute. It's a very well-organised club and the only problem is driving in Greek traffic. That's a bit different."

There are no traffic jams in his football career, though. "Qualifying for the finals of Euro 2000 meant so much to me," says Henriksen. "I know I won't have too many chances to play in big tournaments and I'm determined to make the most of it. I want to prove I belong on that kind of stage.

"There is a great feeling in the squad about our chances. Coach Bo Johansson has instilled a superb spirit – he treats us like adults and we appreciate it. I know that a German-type regimented discipline wouldn't suit me.

"It takes four or five matches to become settled in the international game, and I feel I have achieved that now. It's all happened pretty quickly, but it proves that no one should ever give up hoping that they can make the jump to the highest level. Anything is possible if you keep working hard.

"I want to keep my place as long as possible. And you can guarantee that I won't take anything for granted about playing for Denmark. Coming so late, I know what a privilege it is."

Henriksen joined AB as a 16-year-old but was in his mid-twenties by the time he won widespread recognition, captaining the club, one of Denmark's oldest and most traditional, to promotion to the Superliga at the end of 1995-96.

Making the engine room tick...Leonhardsen

Oyvind Leonhardsen

The midfielder has fought his way back into contention for Norway, writes Brian Glanville

JUST before the end of Norway's 2-1 defeat of Brazil in their France 98 group game in Marseille, Oyvind Leonhardsen started to cry on the pitch.

"It was because I was so tired," he recalls. "We had played really well – then Bebeto scored. 'Now we are finished,' I thought. Then Flo equalised. We had worked so hard before we scored, and I thought we deserved to get something out of this game."

Kjetil Rekdal made sure that they did, converting an 88th minute penalty to put Norway into the second round.

Leonhardsen says: "This was a special game for us, because we had to win to go through. It's my best memory in football."

However, things were soon to go downhill for the midfielder. He lasted only 13 minutes of Norway's second-round defeat by Italy, and apart from a brief appearance as a substitute against Romania in a friendly later that summer, did not appear for his country again until May 1999.

This lean period at international level coincided with a frustrating time at Liverpool, where for much of the 1998-99 season he dropped out of the first-team picture altogether.

Only at the end of the campaign did he battle his way back into contention, playing the last six

Rock solid...Henriksen has established himself in the centre of Denmark's defence

On the strength of Henriksen's excellent performances at club level, Johansson called him up for a debut, against Scotland just before France 98. But although he impressed enough in both that game and another warm-up, against Cameroon, to earn a place in the finals squad, he didn't get a game in the tournament itself.

Henriksen's breakthrough finally came against Italy in the autumn of 1998, when he was voted man of the match. Since then his place alongside Chelsea's Jes Hogh has never been in doubt. The pair have developed an intuitive understanding, and their solidity at the back went a long way to sustaining Denmark's superb unbeaten run during the last eight months of 1999.

With Peter Schmeichel behind them in goal, the Danes will be difficult to score against this summer – even playing in the Granite Group against France, Holland and the Czech Republic.

Fact file

Country Denmark
Club Panathinaikos (Gre)
Born August 27, 1969, in Copenhagen
Previous club AB
International debut March 1998, v Scotland
International caps 14 (0 goals)
Honours Danish Cup 1999

games and earning the opportunity to re-establish himself with the national side.

This he took by scoring in his first full game back, against Jamaica, and he was a starter in Norway's final three Euro 2000 qualifiers last autumn, in which he scored twice, including the only goal of the crucial home win over Greece in September.

By this time, Leonhardsen had moved on to a new English club, Tottenham, where his energy, invention and versatility made such an impact in the early part of this season. It was his bad luck to suffer an injury that has kept him out of the Spurs team for weeks on end.

However, his form for both club and country in the autumn has only strengthened his case to be included in Norway coach Nils Johan Semb's plans for the summer, fitness permitting.

Whatever affinity Leonhardsen has developed with Semb, who took the helm after France 98, there is clearly a special bond with the coach's predecessor, Egil Olsen, now manager of Wimbledon, where Leonhardsen also began his career in England.

It was Olsen who gave Leonhardsen his international debut, when still a Molde player, in October 1990. That game, a friendly against Cameroon, was also Olsen's debut as national team coach and the start of the process of converting Norway from European minnows into the sort of team who could beat the likes of Brazil at a World Cup finals.

Leonhardsen pays due credit to his former boss for this transformation.

"What was special about Olsen in the beginning was that he made us believe we could beat the big countries, like Germany, Holland and England," he says. "Before each game, he could tell us how the game would go. It was amazing, because that was exactly what would happen.

"It was easy for us to listen to him because he commanded so much respect. That kind of man won't say much, always quiet, but in just a few words he can tell a lot."

But Leonhardsen is well aware of his own qualities, which Olsen admired enough to reward him with almost 60 caps, including appearances at two World Cups.

"Olsen liked my style of play because I'm very good at changing from defence to attack," says Leonhardsen. "Because he can see from the statistics that most goals are scored when you can go straight forward, most goals conceded when you are caught in possession."

Above all, Leonhardsen wants always to be in the thick of the action, in the middle – which was why things went awry at Liverpool, where they stuck him on the flank. "I'm very much attack-minded, I have to be there. If you watch me in a game, I'm always there, I'm always in the area, because I have a good engine. I like to be where things are happening.

"Some managers look at me and say I go forward too much, but I'm always working back. I'm always there to make space for others. I'm always there to make runs forward, or to give them options up front."

Leonhardsen's return to the international scene has indicated that Semb is another believer in his abilities. The stage is now set for the midfielder to convince the rest of Europe.

Fact file

Country Norway
Club Tottenham (Eng)
Born August 17, 1970, in Kristiansund
Previous clubs Molde, Rosenborg, Wimbledon (Eng), Liverpool (Eng)
International debut October 1990, v Cameroon
International caps 66 (16 goals)
Honours Norwegian League 1992, 1993, 1994 (Rosenborg); Norwegian Cup 1992

The men who matter

Magnus Hedman

Luke Nicoli talks to Sweden's celebrity No 1

NOT A DAY passes without the lives of David Beckham and his Posh Spice wife Victoria Adams being splashed across the British tabloid newspapers. Stories of thongs, cross-dressing and trips to Gucci and Prada go hand in hand with the celebrity couple.

Unbeknown to the British hacks, there is another Premiership footballer who attracts similar headlines, but only when he goes back to his native Sweden. Coventry City goalkeeper Magnus Hedman and his wife Magdalena are hot property back home. He is first-choice goalkeeper for the Swedish national team, she is the country's top pin-up with three number one pop hits to her name.

Such is their popularity that they were greeted by frenzied scenes when they last touched down at Stockholm airport. "We returned for the Swedish Sportsman of the Millennium Awards [won by Bjorn Borg] and as soon as we stepped off the plane we were beseiged by cameramen and autograph hunters," says Hedman.

"It's a strange feeling because in England we lead a very quiet life in the countryside, and get no hassle at all."

Hedman was back in his native city to represent the Swedish football squad, who were in the running to win the Team of the Year award. His status is such that he shared a table with the Swedish Prime Minister and UEFA president Lennart Johansson.

Unfortunately for Hedman, the country's World Cup-winning handball team took the top prize, which left him somewhat perplexed. "I thought we'd win after the way we got to Euro 2000 – the first time we've qualified for the tournament," he said. "We put Sweden back on the footballing map."

Nobody can argue with that. Coach Tommy Soderberg's men cruised to the finals, leaving England a very poor second in Group 5, and Hedman believes the momentum will continue into the finals, despite the absence of striker Henrik Larsson, still recovering from a severe leg fracture.

"Henrik's injury has been a big blow to us, because he scores so many goals, but we've had plenty of time to prepare without him," Hedman adds. "Kennet Andersson will be the pivotal figure in our attack, and Andreas Andersson has been in good form this season, as well. I'm sure they will cause many problems."

Par Zetterberg also is pushing hard for a place in the Swedish side. He has had his fall-outs with Soderberg, but Hedman believes he could be vital as Sweden take on Group B opponents Italy, Turkey and Belgium.

Positive thinking...Sweden goalkeeper Magnus Hedman

"For the past five or six years, Par's been the best player in the Belgian League, and although he went on as sub against Luxembourg and Bulgaria in qualifying, he's not been happy. But he has great determination, and if he does start in the finals I know he has the determination to do well for us. And he knows Belgium's players inside out."

Confrontations with Soderberg have failed to surface among the rest of the squad. According to Hedman, the coach has "total respect" from his players, and the recent appointment of Lars Lagerback as joint head coach will improve Sweden's chances further.

"Joint coaches rarely work, like at Liverpool with Gerard Houllier and Roy Evans, but this is a different scenario altogether. I worked with both Soderberg and Lagerback at AIK in the early 1990s and won League and Cup honours with them.

"They work brilliantly together because although Soderberg is a good coach and motivator, Lagerback is technically better. With both of them in charge this summer, we have a good chance of making progress.

"Italy will be favourites, but we believe all our opponents will be wary of us. The expectations are high back home and nothing but qualification from our group will be good enough."

Fact file

Country Sweden
Club Coventry (Eng)
Born March 19, 1973, in Stockholm
Previous club AIK Stockholm
International debut February 1997, v Romania
International caps 20
Honours Swedish League 1992; Swedish Cup 1996, 1997

Retirement...Gheorghe Hagi will quit the Romanian side in August

News from the finalists

THIS YEAR's European Championship winners will receive 12 per cent, or about £5.5million, from the £45m central pool of ticket, television and sponsorship money.

The runners-up will take 11 per cent, or some £5m, and the rest of the money will be shared among the other national associations. The bottom teams in the first-round groups can expect £1.8m.

YUGOSLAVIA: Defender Zoran Mirkovic, who was sent off in his country's final Euro 2000 qualifier, against Croatia, has had his suspension reduced on appeal from four games to three, but will still be ruled out of all his country's group games at the finals.

Meanwhile, preparations for the tournament began with two friendlies for Yugoslavia's B team in Spain, against regional selections of the Canary Islands (drawn 2-2) and Catalonia (lost 1-0).

Those taking part who are pushing hard for places in the final squad include Zeljko Cicovic (Las Palmas), Nenad Grozdic (Vitesse Arnhem), Mateja Kezman (Partizan Belgrade) and Nikola Lazetic (Obilic).

ROMANIA: Veteran midfielder Gheorghe Hagi has said that he will play only one more international after the Euro 2000 finals – a friendly against Yugoslavia in Bucharest on August 22. Hagi, 35 on February 5, first played for Romania in 1983 and has won 118 caps.

National coach Emerich Jenei named a 20-strong squad for an eight-nation tournament in Cyprus, with the emphasis on youth. "I want to see young players in action," he said. Newcomers in the squad included defenders Florentin Dumitru (Astra Ploiesti) and Cornel Buta (Dinamo Bucharest), midfielders Romeo Maldarasanu (Rapid Bucharest) and Catalin Hildan (Dinamo), and striker Marius Nicolae (Dinamo).

SLOVENIA will also be playing in Cyprus along with Romania. The other nations involved are Latvia, Slovakia, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova.

NORWAY strikers Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Tore Andre Flo were omitted from the squad to play in a tournament at La Manga in Spain against Sweden, Iceland and Denmark, but coach Nils Johan Semb recalled Jostein Flo, cousin of Tore Andre. Midfielder John Riise, 19, was included in the squad for the first time.

Others chosen: Espen Baardsen (Tottenham), Morten Bakke (Molde), Frode Olsen, Mike Kjoeleo (both Stabaek), Orjan Berg, Andre Bergdolmo, Bjorn Otto Bragstad, John Carew, Erik Hoftun, Bent Skammelsrud, Roar Strand, Jan Derek Sorensen (all Rosenborg), Raymond Kvisvik (Brann), Jostein Flo (Stromsgodset), Jan Frode Nornes (Odd Grenland), Andreas Lund (Molde), Staale Solbakken (Aalborg), Trond Andersen, Martin Andresen (both Wimbledon), Henning Berg (Manchester United), Claus Lundekvam (Southampton), Vidar Riseth (Celtic), Ole Martin Aarst (Gent).

ENGLAND are likely to be without Michael Owen for the Wembley friendly against Argentina on February 23 after he limped off with a recurrence of a hamstring injury in Liverpool's 0-0 draw against Middlesbrough.

WARM-UP GAMES ARRANGED TO DATE

BELGIUM
PORTUGAL (Feb 23, Brussels); **HOLLAND** (Mar 29, Brussels); **NORWAY** (Apr 26, Oslo); **DENMARK** (June 3, Copenhagen)

CZECH REPUBLIC
HONG KONG XI (Feb 5, Hong Kong); **REP OF IRELAND** (Feb 23, Dublin); **AUSTRALIA** (Mar 29, Prague); **GERMANY** (June 3, Nuremberg)

DENMARK
PORTUGAL (Mar 29, Lisbon); **SWEDEN** (Apr 26, Copenhagen); **BELGIUM** (June 3, Copenhagen)

ENGLAND
ARGENTINA (Feb 23, Wembley); **BRAZIL** (May 27, Wembley); **CROATIA** (May 31, Wembley – tbc); **MALTA** (June 3, La Valletta)

FRANCE
POLAND (Feb 23, venue tba); **SCOTLAND** (Mar 29, Glasgow); **SLOVENIA** (Apr 26, Paris); **CROATIA** (May 28, Zagreb); **MOROCCO** (June 4, venue tba)

GERMANY
HOLLAND (Feb 23, Amsterdam); **CROATIA** (Mar 29, Zagreb); **SWITZERLAND** (Apr 26, Kaiserslautern); **CZECH REPUBLIC** (June 3, Nuremberg); **LIECHTENSTEIN** (June 7, Freiburg)

HOLLAND
GERMANY (Feb 23, Amsterdam); **BELGIUM** (Mar 29, Brussels); **SCOTLAND** (Apr 26, Arnhem); **ROMANIA** (May 27, Amsterdam); **POLAND** (June 4, venue tba)

ITALY
SWEDEN (Feb 23, Palermo); **SPAIN** (Mar 29, Barcelona); **PORTUGAL** (Apr 26, venue tba); **NORWAY** (June 3, Oslo)

NORWAY
SWEDEN (Feb 4, La Manga); **TURKEY** (Feb 23, Izmir); **SWITZERLAND** (Mar 29, venue tba); **BELGIUM** (Apr 26, Oslo); **SLOVAKIA** (May 27, Oslo); **ITALY** (June 3, Oslo)

PORTUGAL
BELGIUM (Feb 23, Brussels); **DENMARK** (Mar 29, Lisbon); **ITALY** (Apr 26, venue tba)

ROMANIA
GREECE (Mar 29, Athens); **UKRAINE** (Apr 26, Bucharest); **HOLLAND** (May 27, Amsterdam); **GREECE** (June 3, Bucharest)

SLOVENIA
OMAN (Feb 23, Muscat); **FRANCE** (Apr 26, Paris); **LUXEMBOURG** (June 3, Luxembourg)

SPAIN
CROATIA (Feb 23, Split); **ITALY** (Mar 29, Barcelona); **SWEDEN** (June 3, venue tba); **LUXEMBOURG** (June 7, Luxembourg)

SWEDEN
NORWAY (Feb 4, La Manga); **ITALY** (Feb 23, Palermo); **AUSTRIA** (Mar 29, Vienna); **DENMARK** (Apr 26, Copenhagen); **SPAIN** (June 3, venue tba)

TURKEY
NORWAY (Feb 23, Izmir)

tba = to be announced; tbc = to be confirmed

Capello's boys close

Paddy Agnew on the *giallorossi's* long search for a Serie A title

THE Roma fans' dream factory has been working overtime. For the first time in over a decade, meaningful success has looked a realistic possibility.

The team, coached by Fabio Capello, have proved one of the strongest in Serie A, cruising through to the fourth round of the UEFA Cup, briefly leading the table and hammering Lazio 4-1 in the first of the two seasonal derbies.

For a whole generation of *romanisti*, League title success is but a distant memory, when legendary names such as Falcao, Di Bartolomei, Conti, Pruzzo, Ancelotti and Prohaska won the *scudetto* back in 1983.

For a younger generation of Roma fans, the Champions League represents uncharted territory. They will have heard stories but not seen Roma's 1984 Champions Cup Final, lost to Liverpool in a penalty shoot-out in front of their own fans at the Olympic stadium.

Those supporters will not need reminding that the 1990s represented a disappointing decade for Roma, whose only trophy win came in the Italian Cup in 1991 and whose best Serie A finish was fourth under Czech coach Zdenek Zeman in 1997. More might have been expected from a side that bears the proud name of the capital city and from a club that is followed with passion and intensity.

Welcome additions...Fabio Capello with new signing Hidetoshi Nakata

'More' may be on the way. When Roma pulled off one of the most significant mid-season transfer deals by signing Japanese star Hidetoshi Nakata from Perugia, the club may have been putting into place another piece in the complex mosaic that makes up a winning side.

For all Roma's current potential, however, it is unlikely that they can win this season's League title. What is sure, though, is that Roma now have in place nearly all the quintessential elements for serious success – an ambitious president, an experienced and winning coach, a talented squad and, of course, some of the most enthusiastic fans in western Europe.

Roma's recent rise and fall is linked to the name of former president Dino Viola, who guided the team during the halcyon days of the mid-1980s when it often seemed that the Italian title was decided by the outcome of the Roma-Juventus clash.

Viola was a controversial man, more than once investigated, in particular in relation to an alleged bribery attempt on French referee Michel Vautrot on the eve of Roma's European Cup semi-final second leg against Dundee, in Rome in 1984.

An industrialist with his own machine parts business, Viola was a man with soccer savvy, friends in high places and a withering turn of byzantine phrase. After his death, while still president, in January 1991, Roma's fortunes declined sharply.

Following a two-year parenthesis under industrialist Giuseppe Ciarrapico, Roma was bought in November 1993 by current president Franco Sensi, a man whose Gruppo Sensi operates in the building, publishing, petrol and tourism sectors. Not without difficulty, Sensi has been trying to put together a winning side ever since.

In that context, no transfer action was more significant than his hiring of former Milan and Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello last summer. Having tried Carlo Mazzone, Carlos Bianchi and most recently Zeman, Sensi may finally have found a coach equipped with both the technical know-how and mental resilience necessary to achieve success in as demanding a *piazza* as Rome.

Capello's squad have a lot going for them. Marco Delvecchio and Vincenzo Montella (£14million from Sampdoria last summer) are two of the sharpest Italian strikers in the business, and not for nothing are both in Dino Zoff's current Italy squad.

Brazilians Zago, Cafu and Aldair, as well as Frenchman Vincent Candela, provide class and experience in defence. Damiano Tommasi, Eusebio Di Francesco, and Cristiano Zanetti are useful midfield ball winners and workers.

in

Add two names – Nakata, whose January deal was worth £17m, and Francesco Totti – and you have an impressive unit. If Nakata and Totti can achieve a peaceful co-habitation (not by any means guaranteed because they have similar, playmaking roles), then Roma could be set for a sparkling second half to the season.

Totti is a familiar name to *World Soccer* readers. We have long since nominated him the 'Great Blue Future' of Italian soccer. He is blessed with Brazilian-style close control, and has both sharpshooting and playmaking skills in abundance. Young but not inexperienced at 23 (this is his eighth season in Serie A), he has been regularly outstanding throughout this autumn, clearly having benefited from being moved back from his striker role of the Zeman days to the playmaking position favoured by Capello.

While Totti, Nakata et al have the fans dreaming, Capello tends to be more prosaic. When I interviewed him recently, he pointed out emphatically that while nobody can guarantee to win the League title, he does promise to build a Roma team that can compete with any side in Italy or Europe.

Over the years, Italian soccer commentators often have pointed to the difficulties of coaching in Rome as one of the major reasons why Roma and Lazio, between them, have won only three League titles. Rome, they point out, is a place where the constant presence and pressure of national and local media make it impossible for a coach to get on with his job in peace and quiet.

In his matter of fact way, Capello tends to play this down, saying: "People say Rome is a difficult place to coach. To some extent it is because you have the pressure of a lot of local radio and TV stations here as well as the nationals; then there are the Romans, always talking about football – they always know exactly how you should play, who should be on the team etc.

Smart operator...Marco Delvecchio is one of Serie A's most impressive forwards

"In my experience, however, Roma is nothing like as difficult as it was with Madrid. There the pressure was unrelenting. When you coach Real Madrid, as I did, you are coaching a team that has all sorts of political overtones, and a team, of course, that must do one thing and one alone: beat Barcelona."

'No transfer action was more significant than Sensi's hiring of former Milan and Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello last summer'

For the record, Capello coached Real Madrid in the 1996-97 season, winning the Spanish League at the first time of asking.

Analysing Roma's successful autumn, he claims not to have been "particularly surprised" to find himself joint top of Serie A, even if briefly. This season's contest, he points out, will remain close all the way to the finish.

Unlike colleagues such as Alberto Zaccheroni at Milan, Carlo Ancelotti at Juventus or Sven Goran Eriksson at Lazio, Capello has used a relatively small number of players so far this season. Whenever possible, he sticks to a first XI of: Antonioli – Zago, Aldair, Rinaldi – Cafu, Assuncao, Zanetti, Candela – Totti – Montella, Delvecchio.

"I was the first coach in my time at Milan to use the turnover system, to change players about. But, at the moment, with this Roma, I need to build a team, build a certain mentality, and when you make a lot of changes to a side then the tension level drops."

Capello's careful approach is aimed at creating long-term success and his plans are mirrored by the ambitious projects being embarked on by the Sensi regime. The schedule for 2000 includes a stock market flotation and the club's own TV channel.

The Roma Dream Factory is sure to be kept busy.

Expectant...Roma fans await the *scudetto*

Watches land club in bother

ROMA were at the centre of major controversy as the New Year began when it was revealed that the club had offered £42,000-worth of Christmas presents to Serie A and B referees and linesmen. Media reports claimed that Roma sent Rolex watches to 36 referees and Philipps watches to 74 linesmen. Roma also sent a gold Rolex, worth some £8,500, to both Paolo Bergamo and Pierluigi Pairetto, the two former match officials now in charge of refereeing appointments for all Serie A and Serie B games.

President Sensi reacted angrily to suggestions that his club had been trying to win favours with referees. "These are presents that all clubs send at Christmas," he said. "We've been doing it for five or six years now. All these expenses are written into our accounts, there for everyone to see."

Sensi's defence was at least partly backed when the media discovered that other clubs had indeed sent presents to match officials. Inter, for example, sent an electro-stimulator training device, while Milan sent champagne, Bari olive oil, Torino cold meats, Perugia cakes, Empoli leather jackets, and Lazio a package of products made by the Cirio foodstuffs company owned by club president Sergio Cragnotti.

While angry federation president Luciano Nizzola ordered the immediate return of all presents which "by their nature or value do not come within the confines of normal end-of-year presents", the two refereeing bosses, Bergamo and Pairetto, vigorously defended themselves.

Pairetto said: "As soon as we received these presents [from Roma], we notified the League, who in turn decided to discuss the whole business with the football federation to decide what steps to take. All of this would have happened, anyway, even if this story had never made it into the papers. All the referees, as soon as they had received the present, informed us about it."

Golden boy...Francesco Totti

THE COACH

Fabio CAPELLO
Born 18.6.46. The most successful Italian coach of the 1990s, winning five League titles, four with Milan, one with Real Madrid, plus the European Cup and Supercup. Took over at Roma in the summer. Won 32 caps for Italy during playing career with Roma, Juventus and Milan.

GOALKEEPERS

Francesco ANTONIOLI
14.9.69. First-choice keeper who joined from Bologna in summer. A *scudetto*-winner as a reserve with Milan in 1992 and 1993.

Edoardo DOMANICO
27.5.81. Local lad recently promoted from youth team.

Cristiano LUPATELLI
21.6.78. Second-choice signed from Fidelis Andria during summer.

DEFENDERS

Marcos de Morais, CAFU (Bra)
7.6.70. Vastly-experienced raiding full-back who has played in two World Cup Finals for Brazil and now captains his country. Joined Roma from Palmeiras in 1997 after six seasons at Sao Paulo and half a season with Spain's Zaragoza.

Antonio Carlos ZAGO (Bra)
18.5.69. Brazilian international centre-back who has been a regular since his arrival in February 1998 from Corinthians. Spent a season in Japan at Kashiwa Reysol and has also played in Spain (Albacete).

ALDAIR Nascimento d. Santos (Bra)
30.11.65. Veteran centre-back, World Cup-winner in 1994, now in his 10th season in Rome. A regular at sweeper despite advancing years.

Sergei GURENKO (Bls)
30.9.72. Belarus international signed from Lokomotiv Moscow last summer. Can play in defence or midfield.

Amedeo MANGONE
12.7.68. Has seen regular action at centre-back alongside Zago. Has yet to score a League goal in 150 games for Roma, Bologna and Bari.

Great expectations...mid-season signing Hidetoshi Nakata

Alessandro RINALDI
23.11.74. Right-sided defender signed from Bologna last summer. Started at Lazio before working his way around the lower leagues.

Maurizio LANZARO
14.3.82. Youth-team product.

Marco QUADRINI
30.1.79. Youth-team product.

Fabio PETRUZZI
24.10.70. Out-of-favour centre-back.

Vincent CANDELA (Fra)
24.10.73. French international who joined Roma in January 1997 from Guingamp. Right-footed but can play in any defensive position. Member of France 98 squad but did not play.

MIDFIELDERS

Cristiano ZANETTI
14.4.77. Hard worker and an Italian Under-21 international. No relation of Inter's Javier.

MARCOS ASSUNCAO (Bra)
25.7.76. Brazilian international who joined from Santos last summer. Regular choice in central midfield.

Hidetoshi NAKATA (Jap)
22.1.77. The Asian Footballer of the Year who joined Roma from Perugia in a deal worth an estimated £50m. Nakata's worth comes more from his commercial importance than his ball skills. The transfer deal cost £18m, with Perugia receiving Russian forward Dmitri Alenichev, valued at £6m, plus the loan of midfielder Manuele Blasi. Nakata is a massive pin-up in Japan: Fila sportswear, Subaru cars, Aau Plus drinks and MasterCard are some of the products endorsed by him, followed by fashion houses such as Prada and Armani, plus a Japanese supermarket chain. More than 70,000 Nakata no. 7 Perugia shirts were sold in Japan during his 18-month spell there. Nakata has an internet site which claims 200,000 page views per day.

Francesco TOTTI
27.9.76. The Great White Hope of Roma and, potentially, the Italian national side. In great form after Capello switched him from striker to play behind Montella and Delvecchio. Free-kick expert with great ball skills.

Eusebio DI FRANCESCO
8.9.69. Left-sided workhorse who was in the lower leagues until getting a break with Piacenza in 1995. Within two years he was playing for Italy.

Manuele BLASI
17.8.80. Youth-team product who spent last season on loan at Lecce.

Ivan TOMIC (Yug)
5.1.76. Central midfielder who arrived from Partizan Belgrade last summer.

Damiano TOMMASI
17.5.74. Consistent right-sided performer often used as a substitute.

FORWARDS

Gustavo BARTLET (Arg)
2.9.74. Yet to make an impact since arriving from Lanus two seasons ago.

Vincenzo MONTELLA
18.6.74. The big summer buy, £15million from relegated Sampdoria. Small, but a clever operator and good finisher.

Gaetano D'AGOSTINO
3.6.82. Prolific scorer at youth team level who turned pro in 1997.

Marco DELVECCHIO
7.4.73. Left-footed striker who scored six goals in his first seven League games of the season. A prolific scorer used on an irregular basis by his previous clubs Inter, Venezia and Udinese.

FABIO JUNIOR Pereira (Bra)
20.11.77. Inevitable comparisons with Ronaldo (shaved head, started with Cruzeiro). Tall and physical striker used mostly as a substitute. Roma paid Cruzeiro £9.5m for him and he is seen as one for the future.

MARCH 2000

THE NO.1 INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

WORLD SERVICE

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S STATS & FACTS

INTERNATIONALS

Wednesday, December 29

Dec 29 - Abidjan - friendly
Ivory Coast 3 (Guel pen 41, Diallo 43, 45)
Burkina Faso 1 (Koudou 4)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 9,000

Dec 29 - Alajuela - friendly
Costa Rica 1 (Medford 70)
Honduras 1 (Garcia 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 19,000

Wednesday, January 5

Jan 5 - Johannesburg - friendly
Egypt 2
Togo 1

Thursday, January 6

Jan 6 - Assouan - friendly
Egypt 4 (Ahmed Salah Hosni 44, Hossam Hassan 52, Abdel Halim Ali 62, Abdel Zaher Al-Saqqa 72)
Gabon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

Friday, January 7

Jan 7 - Tunis - friendly
Tunisia 7 (Sellimi 11, 22, Azaiez 20, Kanzari 35, 38, B Noukadida 51, Beya 58)
Togo 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 4,000

Sunday, January 9

Jan 9 - Oakland, California - friendly
Mexico 2 (Hernandez 3, Blanco 18)
Iran 1 (Ali Daei pen 26)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 34,289
Mexico: Martinez - Suarez, Beltran, Torrado, Mendez, Mora (Nava 70), Osorno (Hierro 61), Ramon Ramirez (Estrada 88), Rodriguez, Blanco, Hernandez.
Iran: Tabatabei - Zarincheh, Hashemi-Nasab, Khakpour (Fekri 65), Hamedani, Emamifar, Estili (Dinmohammadi 65), Mahdavikia, Halali (Vavazi 86), Azizi (Mousavi 70), Ali Daei.

Jan 9 - Abidjan - friendly
Ivory Coast 2 (Dago 3, Kalou 83)
Egypt 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000

Jan 9 - Port of Spain - friendly
Trinidad & Tobago 0
Canada 0

Jan 9 - Los Angeles - friendly
Guatemala 1 (Garcia 41)
Armenia 1 (Manoukian 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,000

Jan 9 - Ouagadougou - friendly
Burkina Faso 1 (Sanou 29)
Gabon 1 (Mombo 76)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,000

Tuesday, January 11

Jan 11 - Ouagadougou - friendly
Burkina Faso 2 (Barro 50, Sanou 51)
Cameroon 2 (Mdiefi 46, 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000

Thursday, January 13

Jan 13 - Dakar - friendly
Senegal 0
Cameroon 0
Att: 14,000

Sunday, January 16

Jan 16 - Pasadena - friendly
United States 1 (Armas 48)
Iran 1 (Mahdavikia 7)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 49,212. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
USA: Friedel - Hejduk, Balboa, Llamosa, Agoos, Sanneh (Olsen 62), Armas, Reyna, Lewis (Kirovski 79), Jones, McBride.
Iran: Tabatabei - Zarincheh, Hadheminasab, Fekri, Mahdavikia, Hamedani, Estili (Dinmohammadi 73), Halali, Emamifar, Daei, Azizi.

Tuesday, January 18

Jan 18 - El Jadida - friendly
Morocco 1 (Hadji 34)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000

Jan 18 - Accra - friendly
Ghana 2 (Ayew 17, 63)
Tunisia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000

Wednesday, January 19

Jan 19 - Monterrey - friendly
Mexico 3 (Pardo 20, Mendez 33, Abundis 47)
Romania 1 (Dascalescu 4)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 40,000

Jan 19 - Lome - friendly
Togo 1 (Tadjou Salou 90)
Egypt 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000

Thursday, January 20

Jan 20 - Valletta - friendly
Malta 2 (Carabott pen 39, Busuttil 48)
Qatar 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000
Malta: Barry - Grima, Carabott, Holland, Chetcuti, Buttigieg, Busuttil, Giglio, Mallia, Brincat, Agius.
Qatar: Hussain Al-Rumani - Dahi Al-Tamini, Zamel Al-Kuwari, Al-Rahman Al-Kuwari, Jassim Al-Tamini, Rayed Al-Boloushi, Fahad Al-Kuwari, Al-Nasser Al-Obaidly, Yaser Al-Qusi (Hasan Al-Emadi), Mohamed Al-Enazi, Mubarak Fazli.

Friday, January 21

Jan 21 - Albany - friendly
New Zealand 0
South Korea 1 (Seo Dong-won 65)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,500

OTHER MATCHES

Dec 28 (Mar del Plata): Argentina U-23 1 (Scaloni 30) Yugoslavia U-21 0.
Dec 29 (Granada): Andalucia XI 1 Estonia 0.
(Bilbao): Basque XI 5 Nigeria 1.
Jan 4 (Rio de Janeiro): Vasco da Gama 7 Algeria 0.
Jan 5 (Lima): Peru U-23 1 Guatemala U-23 0.
Jan 9 (Rancagua): Chile U-23 2 Bolivia U-23 3.
Jan 11 (Buenos Aires): Argentina U-23 6 Venezuela U-23 1.
Jan 12 (Los Angeles): Guatemala 1 (Plata 16) Mexico U-23 1 (Osorno 53).
Jan 13 (Los Angeles): Iran 2 (Ali Daei 27, Ali Mousavi 68) Ecuador U-23 1 (Candelario 88).
Jan 14 (Tunis): Tunisia 2 (Kanzari 61, Zitouni 90) Ajax 1 (R Witschge 83).
Jan 16 (Pasadena): United States U-23 3 (Casey 7, Vagenas 51, Donovan 89) Armenia 1 (Petrosyan 17).

WORLD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

GROUP A

Jan 5 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Real Madrid 3 (Anelka 21, Raul 62, Savio pen 7)
Al Nassr 1 (Al-Husseini pen 45)
H-T: 1-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Oscar Ruiz (Col)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Karembeu, Hierro, Roberto Carlos (Karanka 78), Geremi, Redondo, Gutui (McManaman 67), Raul, Anelka, Savio.
Al Nassr: Khojali - Al-Shokia, Hadi Sharify, Mohsin Al-Harthi, Abdallah Al-Karni, Mansour Al-Moussa, Moussa Saib (Ismael Triki 67), Fuad Amin, Fahd Al-Husseini (Hamad Al-Khathran 79), Mohaysen Al-Jaman (Fahd Al-Mehalel 83), Ahmed Bahja.

Jan 5 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Corinthians 2 (Luiza 50, Fabio Luciano 65)
Raja Casablanca 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Braschi (Ita)
Corinthians: Dida - Indio, Joao Carlos, Kleber, Fabio Luciano, Rincon, Vampeta (Edu 85), Ricardinho, Marcelinho Carioca (Senna 77), Edilson, Luizao (Dinei 80).
Raja: Chadli - Misbah, Talal El-Karkouri, El-Haimeur, Aboub Zakaria, Nejery, Jrindou, Reda Ereyahi, Safri, Moustaoudia, Khoubbache (Achami 60).

Jan 7 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Corinthians 2 (Edilson 28, 63)
Real Madrid 2 (Anelka 19, 70)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Matthus Vega (CR)
Corinthians: Dida - Indio, Joao Carlos, Kleber, Fabio Luciano, Marcelinho Carioca, Rincon, Vampeta (Eta 74), Ricardinho (Senna 86), Luizao (Dinei 82).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Karembeu, Hierro, Roberto Carlos, Geremi (McManaman 70), Redondo, Guti (Morientes 70), Raul, Anelka, Savio.

Jan 7 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Al Nassr 4 (Amin 3, Bahja 48, Al-Husseini 50, Saib 85)
Raja Casablanca 3 (Al-Husseini og 24, El-Moubarki 67, El-Karkouri 73)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Rugg (NZ).
Al Nassr: Mohammed Babka (Mahda Al-Dossari 28) - Al-Shokia, Mohsin Al-Harthi, Hadi Sharify, Abdullah Al-Karni (Nassip Al-Ghamdi 71), Mansour Al-Moussa, Moussa Saib, Faud Amin, Mouhaisen Al-Dosari, Fahd Al-Husseini (Fahd Al-Mehalel 76).
Raja: Chadli - Misbah, El-Haimeur, Talal El-Karkouri, Aboub Zakaria, Nejery (Nater 31), Jrindou (Achami 54), Reda Ereyahi (El-Moubarki 54), Safri*, Moustaoudia, Khoubbache. **Sent off, 75min.*

Jan 9 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Real Madrid 3 ((Hierro 38, Morientes 52, Geremi 88)
Raja Casablanca 2 (Achami 28, Moustaoudia 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Real: Casillas - Michel Salgado (Karanka 80), Hierro, Karembeu***, Roberto Carlos*, Guti**, McManaman (Geremi 46), Redondo, Savio, Anelka (Morientes 37), Raul. **Sent off, 62min, **sent off, 62min ***sent off, 84min.*
Raja: Chadli - Talal El-Karkouri, El-Haimeur, Aboub Zakaria, Kharbouch, Nater (Kherazi 90), Reda Ereyahi, El Moubarki*, Achami, Moustaoudia, Khoubbache. **Sent off, 62min.*

Jan 9 - Sao Paulo, Morumbi
Al Nassr 0
Corinthians 2 (Ricardinho 24, Rincon 81)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Jol (Hol)
Al Nassr: Babkr - Al-Shokia, Hadi Sharify, Al-Harthi, Al-Karni, Al-Mousa, Saib (Mehalel 74), Al-Husseini (Al-Janoubi 41), Ahmed Bahja, Al-Amin, Al-Dosari (Triki 88).
Corinthians: Dida - Daniel, Joao Carlos (Adilson 10), Kleber, Fabio Luciano, Rincon, Vampeta (Dinei 74), Ricardinho (Edu 27), Marcelinho, Luizao, Edison.

GROUP B

Jan 6 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Manchester United 1 (Yorke 81)
Necaxa 1 (Montecinos 14)
H-T: 0-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Manchester United: Bosnich - G Neville, Stam, Silvestre, Irwin (Solskjaer 72), Beckham*, Butt, (P Neville 72), Keane, Giggs, Cole, Yorke. **Sent off, 45min.*
Necaxa: Pineda - Milian, Almaguer, Higareda, Cabrera, Lopez, Vigna (Ambriz 79), Luis Perez, Aguinaga, Delgado, Montecinos (Sergio Vazquez 73).

Jan 6 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Vasco da Gama 2 (Felipe 53, Edmundo 86)
South Melbourne 0
H-T: 0-0. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Jol (Hol)
Vasco da Gama: Helton - Jorginho, Junior Baiano Mauro Galvao, Felipe, Gilberto, Amaral, Juninho, Ramon (Alex de Oliveira 80), Romario, Edmundo (Viola 91)
South Melbourne: Jones - Iosifidis, Blatsis, Orlic, Lozanovski, Panopoulos, Trimboli (Anastasiadis 80), Clarkson, De Amicis, Liparoti, Curcija, (Covney 74).

Jan 8 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Vasco da Gama 3 (Romario 23, 25, Edmundo 42)
Manchester United 1 (Butt 81)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Saad Kameel Mane (Kuw)
Vasco: Helton - Jorginho (Paulo Miranda 65), Junior Baiano, Mauro Galvao, Gilberto - Amaral, Juninho (Alex de Oliveira), Felipe, Ramon (Nasa 75) - Edmundo, Romario.
Manchester United: Bosnich - G Neville, Silvestre, Stam (Cruyff 70), Irwin - Butt, Keane, P Neville, Giggs (Fortune 76) - Solskjaer (Sheringham 46), Yorke.

Jan 8 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Necaxa 3 (Montecinos 18, Delgado 28, Cabrera 78)
South Melbourne 1 (Anastasiadis 48)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Falla Ndoye (Sen)
Necaxa: Pineda - Higareda, Almaguer, Lopez (Ambriz), Milian - Cabrera, Vigna, Perez, Aguinaga - Montecinos (Oliva), Delgado (Vazquez).
South Melbourne: Jones - Iosifidis, De Amicis, Orlic - Blatsis, Clarkson, Panopoulos (Curcija), Trimboli (Tsekinis), Coveny - Anastasiadis, Alagich.

Jan 11 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Manchester United 2 (Fortune 8, 20)
South Melbourne 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Braschi (Ita)
Manchester United: Van der Gouw (Rachubka 83) - Berg, Wallwork, Higginbotham, P Neville, Cruyff, Greening, Wilson (Beckham 76), Fortune, Cole, Solskjaer.
South Melbourne: Jones - Blatsis, Liparoti (Goutzioulis, 31), Iosifidis, De Amicis, Clarkson (Tsekinis 71), Panopoulos, Lozanovski, Trimboli, Curcija, Anastasiadis (Covney 66)

Jan 11 - Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Vasco da Gama 2 (Odvan 14, Romario 69)
Necaxa 1 (Aguinaga 5)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Ruiz Costa (Col)
Vasco da Gama: Helton - Paulo Miranda, Mauro Galvao, Junior Baiano (Odvan 10), Gilberto, Amaral, Felipe, Juninho, Ramon, Donizete (Edmundo 70), Romario.
Necaxa: Pineda - Cabrera, Almaguer, Lopez, Higareda, Vigna, Milian (Sergio Vazquez 84), Aguinaga, Perez, Delgado, Montecinos (Ambriz 72).

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Jan 14 – Rio de Janeiro, Maracana
Real Madrid 1 (Raul 15)
Necaxa 1 (Delgado 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Ruiz Acosta (Col)
Necaxa 4-3 on pens
Real Madrid: Bizzarri – Sanchis, Hierro (Ivan Campo 52), Dorado, McManaman, Ivan Helguera, Geremi Njitap, Karanka, Raul Gutierrez (Etoo 67), Savio (Ognjenovic 52), Morientes.
Necaxa: Pineda – Almaguer, Lopez (Ambriz 46), Higareda, Vigna (Oliva 84), Cabrera, Milian, Perez, Aguinaga, Delgado, Montecinos (Vazquez 46).

EUROPE

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Teuta Durres	13	8	1	4	18	9	25
SK Tirana	13	7	3	3	21	7	24
Lushnja	13	6	3	4	19	14	21
Vllaznia Shkoder	13	6	3	4	15	14	21
Tomori Berat	13	6	3	4	13	12	21
Shqiponja G	13	5	5	3	10	8	20
Bylis Ballshi	13	4	6	3	15	15	18
Shkumbini Peqin	13	4	5	4	15	14	17
SK Elbasani	13	5	2	6	12	16	17
Dinamo Tirana	13	4	4	5	13	13	16
Partizani Tirana	13	3	5	5	14	14	14
Skenderbeu	13	4	2	7	11	17	14
Flamurtari	13	3	2	8	13	21	11
Apolonia Fier	13	2	4	7	8	23	10

ANDORRA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Constelacio	7	7	0	0	40	2	21
Encamp	6	3	2	1	21	8	11
Construccions	7	3	2	2	17	19	11
Santa Coloma	5	3	1	1	17	5	10
Sant Julia	7	3	1	3	22	19	10
Principat	6	2	0	4	13	18	6
Benito	7	1	0	6	5	27	3
Sporting	7	0	2	5	3	40	2

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tirol	21	13	3	5	32	18	42
Rapid Wien	22	12	4	6	35	19	40
Sturm Graz	22	11	6	5	38	18	39
SV Ried	22	10	5	7	34	22	35
Austria Wien	21	9	5	7	29	26	32
Salzburg	22	8	8	6	23	20	32
Grazer AK	22	9	4	9	27	27	31
Linz ASK	22	5	5	12	23	34	20
Lustenau	21	4	4	13	15	38	16
Bregenz	21	3	4	14	14	48	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS

17 Ivica Vastic (Sturm Graz)
12 Christian Mayrleb (Austria Wien)
11 Radoslaw Gilewicz (FC Tirol)
11 Rene Wagner (Rapid Wien)
10 Benedict Akwuegbu (Grazer AK)
9 Ronald Brunmayr (SV Ried)

AZERBAIJAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamkir	7	5	2	0	17	1	17
Neftchi	7	5	2	0	13	4	17
Kapaz	7	5	1	1	14	7	16
Shafa	7	3	1	3	7	8	10
ANS Pivani	7	3	0	4	10	10	9
Kimyachi	7	3	0	4	8	9	9
Garabagh	7	2	2	3	6	8	8
Dinamo	7	2	2	3	4	6	8
Vllash	7	2	2	3	6	9	8
Hazar Universitet	7	2	1	4	7	15	7
Turan	7	1	2	4	1	7	5
OIK	7	1	1	5	3	12	4

BELGIUM

Tuesday, January 11

Mouscron 0
Anderlecht 2 (Goor 34, Van Diemen 79) Att: 12,000

Wednesday, January 12

Eendracht Aalst 2 (Meyssen 8, Grommen 79)
Beveren 4 (Sels 23, 37, Torken 65, 82) Att: 3,708

Genk 1 (Ban 54)
Westerlo 1 (Schaessens 66) Att: 20,000

Gent 1 (Joly 48)
Geel 1 (Versavel 16) Att: 6,500

Germinal BA 1 (Karagiannis 80)
Lierse 1 (Van Meir 87) Att: 10,000

Harelbeke 4 (Paas 19, L Kubik 24, Klomp 52, A Kubik 75)
Charleroi 1 (Kaklamanos 70) Att: 4,000

Lokeren 2 (Niksevic 46, Janssens 83)
Lommel 1 (Van Diest 74) Att: 2,500

Mechelen 2 (Ribus 2, Camus pen 80)
Standard 4 (Goossens 31, 55, Ernst 50, Mornar 85) Att: 12,000

St Truiden 0
Club Brugge 1 (De Cock 17) Att: 10,000

Saturday, January 15

Beveren 0
Anderlecht 0 Att: 10,000

Charleroi 1 (Rojas 54)
Mechelen 4 (Elias 1, Chatelle 17, Diallo 33, Camus 49) Att: 3,500

Geel 1 (Daelmans 23)
St Truiden 2 (Dierickx 61, Fiers 80) Att: 6,000

Genk 0
Gent 1 (Dahlum 85) Att: 20,125

Lommel 2 (Dekelver 27, Simons 83)
Germinal BA 2 (Sonck 31, Haagdoren 60) Att: 5,000

Mouscron 4 (Dugardein 26, Vanderhaeghe pen 44, Ma. Zewlakow 54, 58)
Harelbeke 2 (Paas 74, Klomp 89) Att: 6,000

Sunday, January 16

Club Brugge 6 (Vermant pen 7, Verheyen 9, 34, Janssen 15, 31, Smolders 85)
Lokeren 1 (Youla 14) Att: 16,000

Lierse 5 (Van Meir 27, 38, pen 44, Van de Weyer 48, 51)
Eendracht Aalst 2 (Thiebaut 18, D Cooreman 40) Att: 7,500

Standard 4 (Lukunku 11, 77, Goossens 60, Mornar 82)
Westerlo 0 Att: 15,000

Friday, January 21

Germinal BA 5 (Degryse 18, Karagiannis 20, Hofmans 26, Sonck 33, 39)
Club Brugge 3 (Verheyen 13, 79, Englebert 85) Att: 10,000

Saturday, January 22

Genk 1 (Reini 18)
Geel 0 Att: 19,200

ESM ELEVEN

EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES — JANUARY 2000

HOW THEY LINE UP

Van der Sar (4 votes, Juventus); Thuram (3, Parma), Montero (4, Juventus), Maldini (3, Milan), Roberto Carlos (3, Real Madrid); Figo (6, Barcelona), Seedorf (3, Inter), Zidane (8, Juventus), Rivaldo (3, Barcelona); Jardel (4, FC Porto), Raul (2, Real Madrid)

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (PORTUGAL)

Schmeichel (Sporting Lisbon); Thuram (Parma), Nesta (Lazio), Maldini (Milan), Silvinho (Arsenal); Seedorf (Inter), Figo (Barça), Zidane (Juve), Rivaldo (Barça); Jardel (Porto), Van Nistelrooy (PSV)

DON BALON (SPAIN)

Van der Sar (Juve); Thuram (Parma), Abelardo (Barça), Maldini (Milan), Figo (Barça), Seedorf (Inter), Zidane (Juve), Raul (Real Madrid); Simone (Monaco), Jardel (Porto), Suker (Arsenal)

FOOT (BELGIUM)

Toldo (Fiorentina); Southgate (Aston Villa), Christanval (Monaco), Radebe (Leeds), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Barça), Zidane (Juve), Rivaldo (Barça), Berger (Liverpool); Salva (Santander), Trezeguet (Monaco)

FRANCE FOOTBALL

Van der Sar (Juve); Montero (Juve), Blanc (Inter), Keown (Arsenal); Petit (Arsenal), Wise (Chelsea), Zidane (Juve), Zenden (Barça); Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan), Raul (Real Madrid)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Van der Sar (Juve); Zambrotta (Juve), Montero (Juve), Stam (Man Utd), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Barça), Keane (Man Utd), Zidane (Juve), Totti (Roma); Salva (Santander), Shearer (Newcastle)

KICKER (GERMANY)

Juanmi (Zaragoza); Velasco (Celta Vigo), Montero (Juve), Abelardo (Barça), Candela (Roma); Figo (Barça), Zidane (Juve), Nedved (Lazio), Kewell (Leeds); Henry (Arsenal), Jardel (Porto)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOLLAND)

Van der Sar (Juve); Thuram (Parma), Christanval (Monaco), Staelens (Anderlecht), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Barça), Seedorf (Inter), Zidane (Juve), Simeone (Lazio); Jardel (Porto), Christian (PSG)

WORLD SOCCER

Bosnich (Man Utd); Zambrotta (Juve), Montero (Juve), Hyypia (Liverpool), Maldini (Milan); Geremi (Real Madrid), Keane (Man Utd), Zidane (Juve), Gallardo (Monaco); Milosevic (Zaragoza), Rivaldo (Barça)

Gent 1 (Arst 56)
Standard 5 (Mornar 16, 82, Goossens 39, Lukunku 43, Dias 90) Att: 9,500

Lokeren 3 (Youla 18, 46, Staelens 55)
St Truiden 0 Att: 3,500

Mechelen 1 (Bruyninckx 89)
Mouscron 3 (Lawaree 19, Tanghe 46, Ma. Zewlakow 63) Att: 6,500

Sunday, January 23

Anderlecht 2 (Koller 73, Ekakia 79)
Lierse 0 Att: 24,475

Eendracht Aalst 3 (Van Hoyweghen 56, Sarli 57, 62)
Lommel 1 (Scavone 90) Att: 4,137

Harelbeke 6 (Diatel 5, 65, Wostijn 58, 85, Paas 66, Sillah 90)
Beveren 3 (Sels 17, Torken 35, Nuhiji 43) Att: 3,500

Westerlo 1 (T Brogno pen 42)
Charleroi 1 (Kaklamanos 39) Att: 4,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	19	14	4	1	49	19	46
Genk	20	11	6	3	45	24	39
Club Brugge	19	12	2	5	47	20	38
Standard	20	11	2	7	41	34	35
Lierse	20	10	5	5	36	25	35
Germinal BA	20	10	5	5	38	30	35
Gent	20	11	1	8	51	40	34
Mouscron	20	9	4	7	41	31	31
Westerlo	20	8	6	6	40	42	30
Eendracht Aalst	20	8	2	10	39	40	26
Mechelen	20	8	2	10	32	48	26
Lokeren	20	7	5	8	37	41	26
Harelbeke	20	5	4	11	38	42	19
Beveren	20	4	6	10	28	43	18
Charleroi	20	4	6	10	23	38	18
St Truiden	20	4	4	12	20	43	16
Lommel	20	1	9	10	18	39	12
Geel	20	1	9	10	13	37	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
19 Ole Martin Aarst (Gent)
19 Toni Brogno (Westerlo)
13 Jan Koller (Anderlecht)
12 David Paas (Harelbeke)
12 Marcin Zewlakow (Mouscron)
10 Tomasz Radzinski (Anderlecht)
10 Gert Verheyen (Club Brugge)
10 Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht)
9 Marc Degryse (Germinal BA)
9 Jochen Janssen (Club Brugge)
9 Branko Strupar (Genk; now at Derby)
9 Eric Van Meir (Lierse)
9 Sven Vermant (Club Brugge)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

MUSLIM ENTITY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zeljeznicar	15	9	2	4	27	13	29
Jedinstvo	15	8	3	4	24	13	27
Bosna	15	7	5	3	21	13	26
Rudar	15	7	4	4	18	15	25
Zenica	15	6	6	3	23	19	24
Velez	15	7	3	5	23	19	24
Sarajevo	15	7	3	5	21	18	24
Sloboda	15	6	3	6	18	13	21
Buducnost	15	6	2	7	20	19	20
TOSK	15	5	5	5	18	18	20
Lukavac	15	6	2	7	16	21	20
Celik	15	4	6	5	17	20	18
Krajina	15	5	3	7	16	19	18
Iskra	15	4	5	6	17	14	17
Gradina	15	4	2	9	7	29	14
Drina Zvornik	15	2	0	13	15	38	6

SERBIAN ENTITY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boksit	19	12	3	4	41	10	39
Modrica	19	11	3	5	26	14	36
Leotar	19	10	5	4	40	17	35
Sloboda	19	10	5	4	36	13	35
Rudar Ugljevik	19	9	6	4	48	13	33
Radnik	19	9	5	5	38	18	32
Borac Banja Luka	19	9	5	5	36	17	32
Kozara	19	10	2	7	33	20	32
BSK	19	9	3	7	28	19	30
Borac Samac	19	9	2	8	28	28	29
Ljubic	19	7	6	6	29	20	27
Mladost	19	7	5	7	26	25	26
Sloga Doboj	19	8	1	10	27	35	25
Glasinac	19	7	3	9	26	24	24
Drina	19	7	2	10	24	23	23
Rudar Prijedor	19	6	3	10	16	24	21
Famos	19	6	2	11	22	43	20
Sloga Srbac	19	6	1	12	25	38	19
Jedinstvo	19	6	1	12	21	54	19
Sloga Trn	19	0	1	18	8	123	1

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Levski	15	13	1	1	41	7	40
CSKA	15	12	1	2	29	8	37
Neftohimik	15	9	4	2	22	10	31
Velbazhd	15	9	1	5	23	15	28
Lok Sofia	15	7	4	4	29	15	25
Lovech	15	8	1	6	25	15	25
Slavia	15	7	3	5	21	21	24
Spartak Varna	15	6	2	7	17	29	20
Botev	15	6	1	8	21	23	19
Chernomorets	15	5	4	6	14	18	19
Olympic-Beroe	15	5	2	8	15	23	17
Belasitsa	15	5	2	8	14	30	17
Minjor	15	5	0	10	20	25	15
Pirin	15	3	1	11	13	28	10
Dobrudzha	15	3	1	11	8	27	10
Shumen	15	3	0	12	6	24	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Mihail Mihailov (Velbazhd)
9 Dimitar Ivanov (CSKA)
9 Svetoslav Todorov (Lovech)
8 Martin Kushev (Slavia)
8 Serge Yofu (Levski)

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia	16	12	3	1	46	12	39
Hajduk	16	12	3	1	41	15	39
Osijek	16	9	2	5	29	24	29
Rijeka	16	7	3	6	31	21	24
Zagreb	16	5	7	4	19	19	22
Cibalia	16	5	6	5	21	19	21
Slaven	16	4	8	4	16	20	20
Varteks	16	5	3	8	18	28	18
Vukovar '91	16	3	5	8	14	26	14
Sibenik	16	2	7	7	12	26	13
Hrvatski drag	16	2	5	9	17	37	11
Istra	16	2	4	10	16	33	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Bosko Balaban (Rijeka)
13 Josip Simic (Croatia)
9 Tomo Sokota (Croatia)
8 Mate Baturina (Hajduk)
8 Ivica Bosnjak (Cibalia)
8 Vlatko Djolonga (Hrvatski drag)

CYPRUS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anorthosis	15	14	1	0	50	14	43
Omonia	15	12	2	1	46	13	38
AEL	15	10	2	3	27	15	32
APOEL	15	9	3	3	35	16	30
Olympiakos	15	6	4	5	34	33	22
AEK	15	7	1	7	23	25	22
Ethnikos Achna	15	5	5	5	25	21	20
Nea Salamis	15	6	1	8	28	24	19
Apollon	15	5	3	7	23	27	18
ENP	15	5	3	7	25	30	18
Ethnikos Assia	15	4	3	8	14	18	15
APOP	15	3	2	10	13	38	11
Anagennisi	15	3	0	12	17	46	9
Alki	15	1	0	14	16	56	3

CZECH REP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slavia	16	12	4	0	27	7	40
Sparta	16	11	3	2	40	15	36
Drnovice	16	8	3	5	20	14	27
Bohemians	16	6	7	3	16	11	25
Ostrava	16	5	6	5	22	19	21
Liberec	16	5	6	5	12	13	21
Teplice	16	5	6	5	21	23	21
Ceske Budejovice	16	6	3	7	20	22	21
Dukla	16	5	5	6	16	22	20
Brno	16	5	4	7	18	20	19
Chmel Blsany	16	5	3	8	16	29	18
Opava	16	4	5	7	21	19	17
Jablonec	16	4	4	8	15	25	16
Olomouc	16	2	9	5	16	24	15
Kralove	16	3	5	8	16	23	14
Zizkov	16	3	5	8	24	34	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Jan Nezmar (Opava)
7 Milan Fukal (Sparta)
7 Tomas Janda (Ceske Budejovice)
7 Radek Onderka (Opava)
6 Miroslav Baranek (Sparta)

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Herfolge	18	11	4	3	32	23	37
Brondby	18	9	4	5	31	19	31
Silkeborg	18	8	5	5	34	17	29
Lyngby	18	9	2	7	30	27	29
AaB	18	7	7	4	30	22	28
Viborg	18	8	4	6	25	25	28
AB	18	7	6	5	28	22	27
FC Copenhagen	18	7	3	8	19	17	24
AGF	18	4	6	8	18	29	18
OB	18	3	8	7	15	25	17
Esbjerg	18	4	2	12	18	35	14
Vejle	18	1	9	8	17	36	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Peter Lassen (Silkeborg)
10 Henrik Pedersen (Silkeborg)
9 Heine Fernandez (Viborg)
7 Soren Frederiksen (AaB)
7 Peter Rasmussen (AB)
7 Bent Christensen (Brondby)
7 Soren Hermansen (Lyngby)
7 Hans Eklund (Viborg)

ENGLAND

Saturday, January 8

Bradford 1 (Mills 1)
Chelsea 1 (Petrescu 58) Att: 18,276

Wednesday, January 12

Chelsea 1 (Weah 87)
Tottenham 0 Att: 34,969

Saturday, January 15

Arsenal 4 (Henry 3, 81, Suker 28, 33)
Sunderland 1 (Quinn 49) Att: 38,039

Chelsea 1 (Wise 85)
Leicester 1 (Taggart 41) Att: 35,063

Coventry 2 (McAllister pen 56, Keane 74)
Wimbledon 0 Att: 19,012

Everton 2 (Campbell 22, Moore 90)
Tottenham 2 (Armstrong 24, Ginola 28) Att: 36,144

Middlesbrough 1 (Campbell 71)
Derby 4 (Christie 8, 59, Burton 47, Burley 90) Att: 32,745

Sheffield Wed 2 (Alexandersson 52, O'Brien og 67)
Bradford 0 Att: 24,682

Watford 2 (Johnson 44, Helguson 46)
Liverpool 3 (Berger 10, Thompson 41, Smicer 71) Att: 21,367

West Ham 1 (Di Canio 78)
Aston Villa 1 (Taylor 24) Att: 24,237

Sunday, January 16

Newcastle 5 (Ferguson 3, 4, Solano 17, Dryden og 31, Dabizas 83)
Southampton 0 Att: 35,623

Saturday, January 22

Aston Villa 0
Chelsea 0 Att: 33,704

Bradford 3 (Beagrie pen 25, Whalley 37, O'Brien 49)
Watford 2 (Hyde 33, Helguson 88) Att: 16,864

Derby 0
Coventry 0 Att: 28,381

Leicester 1 (Heskey 24)
West Ham 3 (Wanchope 13, 45, Di Canio 60) Att: 19,019

Liverpool 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 44,324

Southampton 2 (Tessem 47, Oakley 56)
Everton 0 Att: 15,232

Tottenham 0
Sheffield Wed 1 (Alexandersson 38) Att: 35,987

Wimbledon 2 (Earle 48, Gayle 69)
Newcastle 0 Att: 22,118

Sunday, January 23

Sunderland 1 (Phillips 52)
Leeds 2 (Wilcox 24, Bridges 51) Att: 41,947

Monday, January 24

Man Utd 1 (Sheringham 73)
Arsenal 1 (Ljungberg 11) Att: 58,293

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds	22	15	2	5	37	25	47
Man Utd	20	13	5	2	51	26	44
Arsenal	23	13	5	5	42	23	44
Liverpool	23	12	5	6	34	20	41
Sunderland	23	11	5	7	37	31	38
Chelsea	23	10	7	6	31	22	37
Tottenham	23	10	5	8	34	27	35
West Ham	22	8	8	6	28	25	32
Aston Villa	23	8	7	8	22	23	31
Leicester	23	9	4	10	32	34	31
Everton	23	7	9	7	37	34	30
Coventry	22	7	8	7	30	24	29
Wimbledon	23	6	10	7	34	37	28
Middlesbrough	21	8	4	9	24	30	28
Newcastle	23	7	6	10	39	39	27
Derby	23	6	5	12	23	33	23
Southampton	22	6	5	11	26	37	23
Bradford	23	5	6	12	19	35	21
Sheffield Wed	22	4	4	14	20	46	16
Watford	23	4	2	17	21	50	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS

20 Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)
14 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
13 Andy Cole (Man Utd)
12 Michael Bridges (Leeds)
11 Paolo Di Canio (West Ham)
11 Dwight Yorke (Man Utd)
10 Kevin Campbell (Everton)
10 Robbie Keane (Coventry)
9 Tony Cottee (Leicester)
9 Dion Dublin (Aston Villa)
9 Tore Andre Flo (Chelsea)
9 Steffen Iversen (Tottenham)
9 Niall Quinn (Sunderland)
8 John Hartson (Wimbledon)
8 Davor Suker (Arsenal)

FA CUP – 3RD RND REPLAYS

Jan 8: Oxford 1 Nottm Forest 3;
Gillingham 2 Walsall 1 (aet).

4TH RND

Jan 8: Aston Villa 1 Southampton 0;
Charlton 1 QPR 0;
Coventry 3 Burnley 0;
Everton 2 Birmingham 0;
Fulham 3 Wimbledon 0;
Grimsby 0 Bolton 2;
Newcastle 4 Sheffield Utd 1;
Plymouth 0 Preston 3;
Sheffield Wed 1 Wolverhampton 1;
Tranmere 1 Sunderland 0;
Wrexham 1 Cambridge 2.
Jan 9: Arsenal 0 Leicester 0;
Man City 2 Leeds 5.
Jan 10: Liverpool 0 Blackburn 1.
Jan 11: Gillingham 3 Bradford 1.
Jan 19: Chelsea 2 Nottm Forest 0.

4TH RND – REPLAYS

Jan 18: Wolverhampton 0 Sheffield Wed 0 *(aet - Sheffield Wed on pens)*
Jan 19: Leicester 0 Arsenal 0 *(aet - Leicester on pens)*

LEAGUE CUP – QUARTER FINALS

Jan 11: West Ham 1 Aston Villa 3 (aet).
Jan 12: Leicester 3 Fulham 3 *(aet - Leicester on pens)*

SEMI-FINAL – 1ST LEG

Jan 12: Bolton 0 Tranmere 1.

FRANCE

Tuesday, January 11

Metz 2 (Baticle 26, Meyrieu 52)
Bordeaux 1 (Wiltord 77) Att: 16,955

Paris SG 2 (Christian 16, L Robert pen 59)
Lyon 2 (Anderson 81, Vairelles 88) Att: 43,807

Wednesday, January 12

Bastia 0
Marseille 0 Att: 8,984

Le Havre 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 9,000

Lens 0
Nancy 1 (Bottelin 43) Att: 33,103

Montpellier 3 (Delaye 24, Mahouve 52, Garny 86)
Nantes 0 Att: 10,148

Rennes 2 (Le Roux 44, Bardon 63)
Strasbourg 1 (Echouafni 85) Att: 9,873

Saint-Etienne 2 (Pedron 73, Sable 77)
Sedan 3 (Frigard 21, Deblock 45, Quint 72)
Att: 18,876

Troyes 1 (Saifi 80)
Monaco 4 (Simone 5, Gallardo 9, 70, Giuly 11)
Att: 14,034

Saturday, January 15

Auxerre 2 (Kapo 26, Marlet 68)
Lyon 0 Att: 15,000

Le Havre 1 (Beuzelin 69)
Saint-Etienne 0

Monaco 3 (Trezeguet 9, 17, Simone 42)
Rennes 1 (Le Roux 51) Att: 5,000

Nancy 1 (Lecluse 25)
Bastia 0 Att: 6,000

Nantes 3 (Sibierski pen 22, 46, Da Rocha 59)
Troyes 0 Att: 18,000

Sedan 0
Lens 0 Att: 9,000

Strasbourg 1 (Zitelli 83)
Metz 1 (Saha 78) Att: 12,000

Sunday, January 16

Bordeaux 1 (Laslandes 43)
Paris SG 1 (Christian 12) Att: 35,000

Marseille 0
Montpellier 0 Att: 35,000

Wednesday, January 19

Sedan 0
Le Havre 1 (Becanovic 26) Att: 9,310

Strasbourg 2 (Camadini 29, Echouafni 50)
Troyes 0 Att: 11,307

Tuesday, January 25

Metz 1 (Baticle 58)
Monaco 1 (Simone 64) Att: 19,861

Troyes 1 (Monier 42)
Marseille 2 (Pires 5, Pouget 60) Att: 16,762

Wednesday, January 26

Bastia 1 (Laurent 68)
Sedan 0 Att: 5,082

Lens 4 (Nouma 18, Coridon 26, Sikora 79, Pierre Fanfan 87)
Le Havre 0 Att: 34,241

Lyon 1 (Bak 5)
Bordeaux 1 (Laslandes 17) Att: 31,492

Montpellier 1 (Loko 3)
Nancy 0 Att: 9,491

Paris SG 4 (Christian 4, 11, 77, 83)
Strasbourg 2 (Ehret 85, 90) Att: 40,698

Rennes 0
Nantes 0 Att: 14,969

Saint-Etienne 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 20,704

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	23	15	4	4	49	20	49
Paris SG	23	12	5	6	37	27	41
Auxerre	23	11	6	6	28	23	39
Lyon	23	11	6	6	28	23	39
Bordeaux	23	8	8	7	34	33	32
Sedan	23	9	5	9	30	32	32
Marseille	23	7	10	6	29	26	31
Bastia	23	7	9	7	26	24	30
Saint-Etienne	23	8	6	9	32	32	30
Rennes	23	8	6	9	29	30	30
Nancy	23	8	5	10	28	29	29
Metz	23	5	13	5	26	24	28
Nantes	23	8	4	11	25	27	28
Lens	23	7	6	10	22	27	27
Strasbourg	23	7	6	10	25	34	27
Le Havre	23	7	5	11	21	35	26
Troyes	23	8	2	13	24	39	26
Montpellier	23	5	6	12	24	32	21

LEADING GOALSCORERS

16 Marco Simone (Monaco)
15 Sonny Anderson (Lyon)
14 David Trezeguet (Monaco)
13 Christian (Paris SG)
12 Alex (Saint-Etienne)
11 Lilian Laslandes (Bordeaux)
11 Sylvain Wiltord (Bordeaux)
10 Stephane Guivarc'h (Auxerre)
9 Tony Cascarino (Nancy)
9 Antoine Sibierski (Nancy)
8 Mickael Madar (Paris SG)
8 Shabani Nonda (Rennes)
7 Frederic Nee (Bastia)
7 Florian Maurice (Marseille)
7 Olivier Echouafni (Strasbourg)

FRENCH CUP

Jan 22: Amiens 1 Auxerre 0;
Besancon 2 Lens 1;
Carcassonne 1 Nantes 4;
Limoges 3 Paris SG 4;
Lorient 2 Montpellier 1;
Marignane 0 Strasbourg 1;
Pacy-sur-Eure 0 Metz 2;
RC Paris 0 Monaco 1;
Saint-Quentin 1 Bastia 0;
Schiltigheim 1 Bordeaux 3;
Segre 0 Marseille 1;
Rennes 2 Chateauroux 0;
Thouars 1 Nancy 0;
Vannes 0 Troyes 1;
Grenoble 1 Saint-Etienne 2 (aet);
Tours 0 Lyon 1 (aet);
Laval 0 Sedan 0 *(aet - Laval on pens)*;
Sochaux 2 Le Havre 2 *(aet - Le Havre on pens)*.

LEAGUE CUP – LAST 32

Jan 7: Auxerre 0 Monaco 0 *(aet - Monaco on pens)*;
Beauvais 1 Le Havre 1 *(aet - Beauvais on pens)*.
Jan 8: Le Mans 1 Chateauroux 1 *(aet - Chateauroux on pens)*;
Louhans-Cuiseaux 0 Nancy 1;
Lyon 3 Amiens 1;
Niort 0 Gueugnon 1;
Paris SG 4 Creteil 3;
Red Star 4 Nimes 2 (aet);
Sochaux 2 Rennes 0;
Strasbourg 0 Metz 0 *(aet - Strasbourg on pens)*;
Toulouse 3 Lens 2 (aet);
Troyes 0 Bordeaux 1 (aet).
Jan 9: Bastia 3 Marseille 0;
Guingamp 1 Montpellier 3;
Nice 0 Sedan 1;
Saint-Etienne 3 Nantes 1;

GEORGIA

FIRST STAGE – FINAL TABLES

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo Tbilisi	14	11	1	2	38	12	34
Dinamo Batumi	14	6	7	1	15	4	25
WIT Georgia	14	6	5	3	20	12	23
Sioni Bolnisi	14	6	3	5	13	19	21
Lokomotive Tbilisi	14	5	3	6	21	19	18
FC Tbilisi	14	3	3	8	21	31	13
Samgurali	14	3	2	9	9	27	11
Arsenali	14	2	3	9	10	23	9

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torpedo Kutaisi	14	11	3	0	33	5	36
Kolkheti 1913	14	8	1	5	19	15	25
Dila Gori	14	6	2	6	19	24	20
Iberia	14	5	3	6	9	20	18
Gorda Rustavi	14	5	1	8	17	18	16
TSU Tbilisi	14	4	4	6	13	18	16
Merani 91	14	3	6	5	14	15	15
Kolkheti Khobi	14	2	4	8	15	24	10

Top four from each group go through to championship play-offs; bottom four go into relegation play-offs

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	17	11	3	3	33	13	36
Bayer Leverkusen	17	9	7	1	29	18	34
Hamburg	17	8	7	2	39	19	31
1860 Munich	17	8	5	4	28	21	29
B Dortmund	17	7	7	3	24	13	28
Stuttgart	17	8	3	6	21	19	27
Werder Bremen	17	7	5	5	34	24	26
Kaiserslautern	17	7	2	8	21	30	23
Hertha	17	5	7	5	22	28	22
Schalke	17	4	9	4	21	20	21
Wolfsburg	17	5	6	6	22	30	21
Freiburg	17	5	5	7	24	23	20
Unterhaching	17	5	5	7	18	20	20
Hansa Rostock	17	5	5	7	23	35	20
Ulm	17	5	4	8	19	25	19
Duisburg	17	2	7	8	18	30	13
E Frankfurt	17	3	2	12	17	27	11
A Bielefeld	17	2	5	10	13	31	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS

9 Adel Sellimi (Freiburg)
8 Marco Bode (Werder Bremen)
8 Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen)
8 Martin Max (1860 Munich)
8 Ebbe Sand (Schalke)
7 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
7 Jonathan Akpoborie (Wolfsburg)
7 Hans-Jorg Butt (Hamburg)
7 Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)
7 Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen)
7 Tony Yeboah (Hamburg)
6 Magnus Arvidsson (Hansa Rostock)
6 Stefan Beinlich (Bayer Leverkusen)
6 Fredi Bobic (Borussia Dortmund)
6 Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern)
6 Paulo Sergio (Bayern Munich)
6 Marc Wilmots (Schalke)

GREECE

Jan 5: Iraklis 2 Aris 0.
Jan 8: Apollon 3 AEK 2; Proodeftiki 1 Panathinaikos 0.
Jan 9: Ionikos 0 Kalamata 1; Kavala 4 Trikala 1; Olympiakos 2 Aris 0; Paniliakos 1 OFI 2; Panionios 1 PAOK 1; Iraklis 3 Xanthi 1; Panahaiki 2 Ethnikos A 0.
Jan 16: Kalamata 0 Trikala 1; AEK 3 Kavala 0; OFI 2 Olympiakos 1; PAOK 1 Apollon 1; Xanthi 1 Paniliakos 0; Panahaiki 0 Iraklis 1; Ethnikos A 1 Proodeftiki 0.
Jan 17: Aris 1 Ionikos 1; Panathinaikos 2 Panionios 1.
Jan 22: Apollon 0 Panathinaikos 3.
Jan 23: Aris 6 Kalamata 1; Trikala 0 AEK 1; Ionikos 1 OFI 1; Kavala 1 PAOK 1; Olympiakos 3 Xanthi 2; Panionios 1 Ethnikos A 0; Proodeftiki 0 Iraklis 1.
Jan 24: Paniliakos 0 Panahaiki 0.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	16	14	0	2	46	14	42
Panathinaikos	16	13	2	1	42	12	41
OFI	16	11	3	2	29	17	36
Iraklis	16	9	2	5	30	23	29
AEK	16	8	3	5	31	21	27
Aris	16	7	5	4	23	17	26
Panionios	16	8	1	7	28	32	25
PAOK	16	6	6	4	27	21	24
Paniliakos	16	6	3	7	20	18	21
Xanthi	16	4	6	6	16	20	18
Ionikos	16	3	8	5	15	21	17
Ethnikos A	16	5	2	9	13	23	17
Panahaiki	16	4	4	8	16	23	16
Kavala	16	3	4	9	16	28	13
Kalamata	16	3	4	9	15	34	13
Proodeftiki	16	3	3	10	9	22	12
Trikala	16	3	3	10	12	30	12
Apollon	16	2	5	9	11	23	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
15 Gomez (OFI)
12 Nalitzis (Panionios)
10 Konstantinou (Iraklis)
8 Ciric (AEK)
8 Giannakopoulos (Olympiakos)
7 Alexandris (Olympiakos)
7 Lymberopoulos (Panathinaikos)

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	18	13	2	3	55	14	41
Heerenveen	17	12	1	4	34	17	37
Ajax	17	11	3	3	47	24	36
Feyenoord	17	9	6	2	33	18	33
Twente	17	9	6	2	30	17	33
AZ	18	10	2	6	36	28	32
Vitesse	18	9	5	4	35	27	32
Willem II	17	9	3	5	30	32	30
Roda JC	17	9	2	6	29	23	29
RKC	18	9	2	7	30	35	29
Utrecht	18	7	1	10	28	35	22
Sparta	17	5	1	11	25	38	16
NEC	17	4	3	10	21	35	15
De Graafschap	18	2	8	8	18	28	14
MVV	18	3	3	12	25	43	12
Fortuna	18	2	5	11	20	33	11
Den Bosch	18	2	4	12	18	47	10
Cambuur	16	2	3	11	15	35	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
22 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (PSV)
17 Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Vitesse)
11 Mariano Bombarda (Willem II)
11 Richard Knopper (Ajax)
10 Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Twente)
9 John Bosman (AZ)
9 Rick Hoogendorp (RKC; now on loan to Celta Vigo)
9 Brian Laudrup (Ajax)
9 Luc Nilis (PSV)
9 Bob Peeters (Roda JC)
9 Barry Van Galen (AZ)
8 Anthony Lurling (Heerenveen)
8 Nikos Machlas (Ajax)

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dunaferr	17	10	6	1	44	15	36
Vasas	17	11	1	5	32	16	34
MTK	17	9	6	2	30	14	33
Ujpest	17	8	6	3	32	20	30
Debrecen	17	8	5	4	25	18	29
Gazszer	17	7	7	3	23	22	28
Tatabanya	17	6	8	3	20	19	26
Ferencvaros	17	7	4	6	27	17	25
Gyor	17	6	6	5	28	18	24
Zalaegerszeg	17	6	6	5	21	13	24
Haladas	17	5	3	9	18	26	18
Diosgyor	17	4	6	7	17	27	18
Nyiregyhaza	17	4	5	8	15	30	17
Kispest-Honved	17	3	7	7	16	22	16
Nagykanizsa	17	3	6	8	14	22	15
Siofok	17	5	2	10	13	27	14
Szeged	17	3	5	9	13	38	14
Vac	17	1	5	11	15	39	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Attila Tokoli (Dunaferr)
11 Peter Horvath (Ferencvaros)
8 Danut Frunza (Diosgyor)
8 Krisztian Kenesei (MTK)
8 Norbert Toth (Ujpest)

ISRAEL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maccabi Haifa	21	16	4	1	53	16	52
Hapoel Tel Aviv	21	16	3	2	49	12	51
H Petach Tikva	21	14	2	5	37	22	44
Hapoel Haifa	21	10	8	3	36	19	38
Beitar Jerusalem	21	10	7	4	36	29	37
M Petach Tikva	21	10	3	8	28	28	33
M Irony Ashdod	21	7	7	7	28	26	28
Maccabi Tel Aviv*	21	7	4	10	26	22	21
Hapoel Irony RL	21	4	8	9	19	37	20
Hapoel Kfar Saba	21	5	4	12	23	38	19
Bnei Yehuda	21	4	6	11	18	37	18
Maccabi Netanya	21	4	4	13	26	44	16
Hapoel Jerusalem	21	4	2	15	17	39	14
Maccabi Herzliya	21	3	4	14	20	47	13

**Four points deducted*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
17 Assi Tubi (Maccabi Petach Tikva)
14 Sergei Clescenco (Maccabi Haifa)
14 Ronnen Harazi (Hapoel Tel Aviv)
13 Rafi Cohen (Maccabi Haifa)
12 Yossi Benayoun (Maccabi Haifa)
12 Amir Turgeman (Hapoel Haifa)
10 Viktor Pacha (Beitar Jerusalem)

ITALY

Sunday, January 9

Bari 3 (Perrotta 28, Enyinnaya 85, D Andersson pen 90)
Venezia 0 Att: 15,571

Cagliari 3 (Oliveira 48, Mboma 90, 90)
Piacenza 0 Att: 14,701

Fiorentina 2 (Batistuta 37, Adani 90)
Inter 1 (Recoba 70) Att: 38,815

Lazio 3 (Salas 42, Nedved 76, Ravanelli 90)
Bologna 1 (K Andersson 50) Att: 66,207

Milan 2 (Bierhoff 38, Jose Mari 68)
Roma 2 (Delvecchio 8, Montella 57) Att: 52,838

Parma 1 (Crespo 90)
Juventus 1 (Del Piero pen 69) Att: 27,910

Perugia 0
Udinese 5 (Sottil 13, Calori og 19, Manfredini 24, Fiore 41, Jorgensen 74) Att: 9,742

Torino 1 (Ferrante pen 81)
Lecce 2 (Lucarelli 66, 90) Att: 15,594

Verona 1 (Adailton pen 77)
Reggina 1 (Pirlo 38) Att: 13,909

Saturday, January 15

Bologna 1 (Signori 88)
Bari 0 Att: 20,000

Venezia 2 (Volpi 13, Maniero 90)
Fiorentina 1 (Batistuta 45) Att: 9,598

Sunday, January 16

Inter 2 (Simic 3, Moriero 82)
Cagliari 1 (Oliveira 17) Att: 58,018

Juventus 3 (Del Piero pen 26, Zidane 89, Kovacevic 90)
Perugia 0 Att: 35,204

Lecce 0
Parma 0 Att: 17,397

Piacenza 0
Torino 2 (Ferrante 82, Pecchia 90) Att: 10,140

Reggina 0
Lazio 0 Att: 24,041

Roma 3 (Totti 1, 42, Apolloni og 7)
Verona 1 (Salvetti 19) Att: 55,399

Udinese 1 (Muzzi 87)
Milan 2 (Boban 40, Shevchenko 61) Att: 22,717

Saturday, January 22

Cagliari 0
Lazio 0 Att: 20,000

Roma 2 (Di Francesco 47, Totti 75)
Piacenza 1 (Piovani 45) Att: 53,147

Sunday, January 23

Bari 1 (Spinesi 83)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 18,051

Milan 2 (Maldini 62, Bierhoff 69)
Lecce 2 (Lucarelli 29, 56) Att: 51,851

Parma 1 (Ortega 89)
Perugia 2 (Calori 25, Olive 34) Att: 16,379

Reggina 0
Juventus 2 (Kovacevic 35, Zidane 64) Att: 26,112

Torino 2 (Ferrante 25, 54)
Bologna 1 (Signori 66) Att: 16,539

Udinese 5 (Fiore 9, Sottil 19, Muzzi 29, 51, Jorgensen 90)
Venezia 2 (Ganz 2, Nanami 41) Att: 19,301

Verona 1 (Laursen 34)
Inter 2 (Recoba 48, Baggio 73) Att: 33,099

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	18	11	6	1	24	8	39
Lazio	18	10	6	2	33	16	36
Roma	18	10	5	3	36	19	35
Inter	18	10	2	6	34	16	32
Milan	18	8	8	2	36	24	32
Parma	18	9	5	4	30	20	32
Bari	18	7	5	6	22	21	26
Udinese	18	7	4	7	30	27	25
Lecce	18	6	6	6	19	26	24
Bologna	18	6	5	7	15	18	23
Perugia	18	7	2	9	18	32	23
Fiorentina	18	5	7	6	18	21	22
Torino	18	5	5	8	16	22	20
Reggina	18	3	8	7	18	27	17
Verona	18	4	4	10	14	27	16
Venezia	18	4	3	11	15	28	15
Cagliari	18	1	8	9	16	28	11
Piacenza	18	2	5	11	10	24	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Hernan Crespo (Parma)
11 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
10 Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce)
10 Vincenzo Montella (Roma)
9 Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)
9 Oliver Bierhoff (Milan)
9 Roberto Muzzi (Udinese)
8 Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus)
8 Mohammed Kallon (Reggina)
8 Marcelo Salas (Lazio)
8 Christian Vieri (Inter)
7 Marco Delvecchio (Roma)
7 Marco Ferrante (Torino)
7 Filippo Maniero (Venezia)
7 Giuseppe Signori (Bologna)
6 Patrick Mboma (Cagliari)
6 Francesco Totti (Roma)

ITALIAN CUP - QUARTER FINALS, 1ST LEGS

Jan 12: Roma 0 Cagliari 1; Milan 2 Inter 3.
Jan 13: Juventus 3 Lazio 2
Jan 18: Venezia 0 Fiorentina 0.

2ND LEGS

Jan 25: Cagliari 1 Roma 0
Cagliari 2-0 on agg.
Jan 26: Lazio 2 Juventus 1
Agg 4-4. Lazio on away goals;
Fiorentina 1 Venezia 1
Agg 1-1. Venezia on away goals.
Jan 27: Inter 1 Milan 1
Inter 4-3 on agg.

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grevenmacher	11	7	3	1	24	9	24
Jeunesse d'Esch	11	7	3	1	22	14	24
Avenir Beggen	11	6	3	2	19	9	21
US Luxembourg	11	5	5	1	17	7	20
Dudelange	11	5	4	2	17	10	19
Hobscheid	11	4	3	4	18	14	15
Rumelange	11	4	3	4	16	20	15
Wiltz	11	3	3	5	17	23	12
Schifflange	11	3	1	7	15	22	10
Sporting Mertzig	11	2	3	6	13	15	9
Mondercange	11	2	2	7	14	21	8
Aris Bonnevoie	11	1	1	9	9	37	4

MACEDONIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sloga	13	9	4	0	28	4	31
Pobeda	13	8	3	2	27	10	27
Rabotnicki	13	8	1	4	20	12	25
Sileks	13	7	3	3	23	15	24
Pelister	13	7	1	5	21	14	22
Cementarnica	13	6	3	4	21	15	21
Vardar	13	5	4	4	28	21	19
Makedonija	13	4	4	5	14	14	16
Tikves	13	4	3	6	16	18	15
Borec	13	4	3	6	15	20	15
Osogovo	13	4	2	7	20	25	14
Sasa	13	3	3	7	14	22	12
Napredok Kicevo	13	3	3	7	19	28	12
Kumanovo	13	0	1	12	2	50	2

MALTA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Birkirkara	9	7	1	1	20	6	22
Sliema Wanderers	9	6	2	1	21	9	20
Floriana	9	6	0	3	22	14	18
Valletta	9	5	0	4	33	16	15
Pieta Hotspurs	9	4	3	2	14	14	15
Hibernians	9	3	4	2	15	11	13
Naxxar Lions	9	2	2	5	10	20	8
Gozo	9	1	3	5	7	16	6
Zurrieq	9	1	3	5	11	28	6
Rabat Ajax	9	0	2	7	9	28	2

MOLDOVA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Serif	18	13	2	3	41	13	41
Zimbru	18	11	4	3	38	12	37
Nistru-Unisport	18	10	5	3	28	13	35
Constructorul	18	9	4	5	23	10	31
Tiligul	18	6	7	5	19	17	25
Olimpia	18	6	3	9	22	28	21
Moldova-Gaz	18	5	5	8	19	28	20
FC Agro	18	4	6	8	17	33	18
Roma	18	4	2	12	15	34	14
Energetic	18	2	2	14	9	43	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Sergei Rogaciov (Serif)
11 Vladimir Pustovit (Moldova-Gaz)
9 Serghey Chirilov (Nistru-Unisport)
9 Vladimir Dovghii (Constructorul)

NORTHERN IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Linfield	23	16	6	1	45	16	54
Coleraine	24	11	5	8	43	30	38
Glentoran	24	10	6	8	36	36	36
Glenavon	24	9	8	7	31	28	35
Portadown	24	9	6	9	43	44	33
Newry Town	24	8	6	10	31	31	30
Crusaders	24	6	10	8	31	35	28
Cliftonville	23	5	9	9	26	33	24
Ballymena Utd	23	3	13	7	28	40	22
Lisburn Distillery	23	4	5	14	24	45	17

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
R Chorzow	15	8	6	1	28	14	30
Polonia	15	8	4	3	23	17	28
Legia	15	6	8	1	30	17	26
Wisla	15	7	5	3	26	17	26
Pogon	15	6	6	3	23	19	24
Zaglebie	15	6	5	4	14	14	23
Arnica	15	5	7	3	24	19	22
Halex	15	5	6	4	17	22	21
Gornik	15	4	7	4	26	19	19
Petro Plock	15	5	4	6	18	21	19
R Radzionkow	15	5	3	7	15	24	18
Odra	15	4	4	7	17	20	16
LKS	15	3	6	6	13	15	15
Widzew	15	3	6	6	21	26	15
Lech	15	2	5	8	18	28	11
Groclin	15	1	2	12	9	30	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Adam Kompala (Gornik)
9 Sylwester Czereszewski (Legia)
7 Tomasz Frankowski (Wisla)
6 Artur Wichniarek (Widzew)
6 Maciej Zurawski (Lech)

PORTUGAL

Friday, January 7

Salgueiros 0
Guimaraes 1 (Geraldo 59)

Saturday, January 8

Estrela Amadora 0
FC Porto 2 (Jardel 78, 83)

Vitoria Setubal 0
Belenenses 2 (Joao Paulo Brito 54, Seba 90)

Sunday, January 9

Benfica 0
Sporting Lisbon 0

Boavista 2 (Sanchez 40, Whelliton 57)
Alverca 0

Farense 2 (Marinescu 24, Carlos Costa 41)
Campomaiorense 2 (Mickey 37, Laelson 89)

Gil Vicente 0
Sporting Braga 0

Rio Ave 0
Maritimo 2 (Mariano 7, Jokanovic 66)

Santa Clara 1 (El Idrissi 83)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Joao Manuel 21)

Saturday, January 15

Maritimo 0
Benfica 0

Sunday, January 16

Alverca 3 (Ramires 65, Anderson 67, Paulo Costa 89)
Rio Ave 1 (Artur Jorge 63)

Belenenses 1 (Joao Paulo Brito 76)
Farense 1 (Hassan Nader 17)

Campomaiorense 2 (Jose Soares 64, Abilio 79)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Eric Gaucho 73)

Guimaraes 2 (Fernando Meira 67, Brandao 70)
Santa Clara 1 (George 29)

Sporting Braga 1 (Odair 55)
Boavista 0

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Acosta 33, pen 56)
Salgueiros 0

Uniao Leiria 0
Vitoria Setubal 0

Monday, January 17

FC Porto 2 (Jardel 16, pen 69)
Gil Vicente 0

Friday, January 21

Belenenses 1 (Tuck pen 63)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Eric Gaucho 70)

Saturday, January 22

Benfica 1 (Nuno Gomes 65)
Rio Ave 0

Campomaiorense 0
Gil Vicente 0

Guimaraes 4 (Brandao 26, 49, Riva 48, 87)
Vitoria Setubal 0

Sporting Lisbon 4 (Acosta 25, Mpenza 30, 37, Pedro Barbosa 48)
Santa Clara 1 (Figueiredo 17)

Sunday, January 23

Maritimo 0
Salgueiros 1 (Joao Pedro 77)

FC Porto 1 (Alessandro 80)
Boavista 0

Sporting Braga 3 (Odair 13, Barroso 83, Tailson 85)
Alverca 1 (Milinkovic pen 60)

Uniao Leiria 2 (Leao 2, Duah 58)
Farense 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	18	13	4	1	38	8	43
Sporting Lisbon	18	12	4	2	32	15	40
Benfica	18	10	5	3	24	12	35
Guimaraes	18	10	4	4	31	19	34
Boavista	18	9	3	6	19	14	30
Maritimo	18	8	5	5	22	15	29
Belenenses	18	6	8	4	21	15	26
Gil Vicente	18	7	4	7	22	20	25
Estrela Amadora	18	6	7	5	20	19	25
Alverca	18	7	2	9	21	26	23
Sporting Braga	18	6	3	9	22	24	21
Salgueiros	18	6	2	10	14	23	20
Campomaiorense	18	5	4	9	16	25	19
Rio Ave	18	4	5	9	19	29	17
Uniao Leiria	18	3	6	9	15	23	15
Santa Clara	18	3	6	9	21	30	15
Farense	18	2	8	8	12	33	14
Vitoria Setubal	18	3	4	11	13	32	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
25 Mario Jardel (FC Porto)
11 Eric Gaucho (Estrela Amadora)
10 Toedtli Ramon (Maritimo)

PORTUGUESE CUP – 5TH RND

Jan 12: Academica 2 Vitoria Setubal 1; Benfica 7 Amora 0; Boavista 8 Paredes 2; FC Porto 4 Sporting Braga 1; Salgueiros 2 Campomaiorense 0; Moreirense 3 Santa Clara 2; Sporting Covilha 0 Rio Ave 2; Farense 2 Estrela Amadora 3; Sporting Lisbon 1 Uniao Leiria 0; Guimaraes 3 Casa Pia 0.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shelbourne	22	13	8	1	27	10	47
Bohemians	22	13	4	5	29	16	43
Cork City	22	11	5	6	35	19	38
Shamrock Rovers	22	11	4	7	37	25	37
St Patrick's Ath	22	10	6	6	29	22	36
UCD	22	8	8	6	23	18	32
Derry City	22	9	4	9	20	26	31
Galway United	22	6	4	12	24	36	22
Finn Harps	22	5	6	11	23	28	21
Sligo Rovers	22	5	5	12	24	41	20
Waterford Utd	22	4	7	11	16	29	19
Drogheda Utd	22	3	7	12	16	33	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Pat Morley (Cork City)
11 Padraig Moran (Sligo Rovers)
8 Glen Crowe (Bohemians)
8 James Mulligan (Finn Harps)
7 Billy Woods (Shamrock Rovers)
6 John Caulfield (Cork City)

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	20	17	2	1	58	15	53
Arges	20	13	3	4	31	15	42
Rapid	20	13	3	4	35	20	42
Ceahlaul	20	11	4	5	27	25	37
Gloria	20	10	2	8	28	24	32
Astra	20	9	3	8	31	24	30
Steaua	19	9	2	8	36	37	29
Bacau	20	8	5	7	21	24	29
U Craiova	20	8	4	8	25	19	28
Petrolul	20	7	4	9	24	31	25
Otelul	20	7	3	10	31	33	24
National	20	6	4	10	27	26	22
Farul	20	6	4	10	24	34	22
Rocar	19	7	0	12	24	31	21
Brasov	20	6	3	11	29	30	21
Onesti	20	6	3	11	24	44	21
Resita	20	4	5	11	24	45	17
Extensiv	20	4	2	14	15	37	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Adrian Mutu (Dinamo; now at Internazionale)
12 Ioan Vladiou (Dinamo)
9 Mircea Ciorea (Astra)
8 Giani Gorga (Onesti)
8 Adrian Mihalcea (Dinamo)
8 Claudiu Niculescu (U Craiova)
8 Florin Petcu (Bacau)
8 Laurentiu Rosu (Steaua)

SAN MARINO

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Folgore	11	7	2	2	28	13	23
Virtus	11	6	3	2	26	12	21
Cosmos	10	5	5	0	19	4	20
Pennarossa	11	5	2	4	15	22	17
Cailungo	11	4	4	3	15	11	16
Tre Penne	11	3	2	6	14	27	11
Juvenes	11	2	3	6	14	31	9
Fiorita	11	1	0	10	3	20	3

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tre Fiori	11	7	2	2	33	20	23
Domagnano	11	6	3	2	32	12	21
Libertas	11	5	3	3	19	18	18
Murata	11	4	3	4	25	25	15
Faetano	11	3	5	3	12	14	14
Montevito	11	3	2	6	9	18	11
San Giovanni	11	2	3	6	11	20	9
Dogana	10	2	2	6	9	17	8

SCOTLAND

Saturday, January 22

Dundee Utd 0
Hibernian 0 Att: 7,457

Hearts 2 (Wales 17, Jackson 50)
Dundee 0 Att: 13,112

Rangers 5 (Moore 36, Van Bronckhorst 38, Numan 43, Wallace 60, Ferguson 82)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 50,023

St Johnstone 1 (Jones 44)
Motherwell 1 (McMillan 85) Att: 4,158

Sunday, January 23

Kilmarnock 1 (Reilly 39)
Celtic 1 (Viduka 30) Att: 14,126

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	18	15	2	1	50	14	47
Celtic	19	13	2	4	54	17	41
Dundee Utd	20	9	4	7	25	29	31
Motherwell	18	7	7	4	29	31	28
Hibernian	21	6	8	7	32	35	26
Hearts	19	6	5	8	28	28	23
St Johnstone	19	5	6	8	19	24	21
Dundee	18	6	1	11	21	30	19
Kilmarnock	19	2	8	9	19	29	14
Aberdeen	19	3	3	13	20	60	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Mark Viduka (Celtic)
12 Billy Dodds (Rangers; 9 for Dundee Utd)
9 Michael Mols (Rangers)
9 Gary McSwegan (Hearts)
8 John Spencer (Motherwell)
8 Jorg Albertz (Rangers)
8 Nathan Lowndes (St Johnstone)
8 Willie Falconer (Dundee)
7 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
7 Russell Latapy (Hibernian)
7 Eyal Berkovic (Celtic)

SLOVAKIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	15	8	6	1	25	10	30
FC Kosice	15	9	3	3	29	16	30
Spartak Trnava	15	7	5	3	19	10	26
Tatran	15	8	2	5	21	20	26
Ruzomberok	15	7	3	5	16	14	24
Ozeta Trencin	15	6	5	4	17	10	23
Zilina	15	7	2	6	24	18	23
Nitra	15	6	1	8	13	18	19
Kerametal	15	5	4	6	11	17	19
Slovan	15	4	6	5	13	11	18
KOBA Senec	15	4	6	5	18	19	18
Petrzalka	15	5	3	7	22	28	18
Humenne	15	4	3	8	14	22	15
Prievidza	15	4	3	8	20	30	15
Banska Bystrica	15	5	0	10	15	25	15
Dunajska Streda	15	3	4	8	15	24	13

SLOVENIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maribor	16	11	4	1	47	19	37
Olimpia	16	10	0	6	36-	25	30
HIT Nova Gorica	16	9	3	4	28	19	30
Rudar Velenje	16	8	3	5	24	18	27
Primorje	16	6	5	5	27	25	23
Prevalje	16	5	7	4	30	21	22
Mura Murska	16	6	4	6	23	20	22
Protonavto Pub.	16	5	7	4	19	19	22
Dravograd	16	5	4	7	21	28	19
Domzale	16	5	3	8	24	31	18
Feroterm Pohorje	16	2	3	11	10	35	9
Potrosnik	16	0	5	11	7	36	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Kliton Bozgo (Maribor)
9 Oskar Drobne (Domzale)
9 Uros Barut (Primorje)
8 Issah Moro (Olimpia)
8 Goran Jolic (Prevalje)

(continued on page 44)

FIFA WORLD PLAYER 1999:

FIFA invited the national coaches of all 201 associations to vote for their World Player of the Year, plus a second and third choice; 140 responded. First place choices were awarded 5pts each, runners-up 3pts and third places 1pt.

	PLAYER	1st pl	x5pts	2nd pl	x3pts	3rd pl	x1pt	Total pts
1	RIVALDO	91	455	28	84	4	4	543
2	David Beckham	18	90	30	90	14	14	194
3	Gabriel Batistuta	5	25	15	45	9	9	79
4	Zinedine Zidane	8	40	7	21	7	7	68
5	Christian Vieri	1	5	7	21	13	13	39
6	Luis Figo	2	10	5	15	10	10	35
7	Andrii Shevchenko	3	15	4	12	7	7	34
8	Raul Gonzalez	1	5	7	21	5	5	31
9	Andy Cole	1	5	5	15	4	4	24
10	Dwight Yorke	2	10	2	6	3	3	19
11	Juan Veron	0	0	5	15	2	2	17
12	Roberto Carlos	2	10	1	3	2	2	15
13	Lothar Matthaus	1	5	2	6	3	3	14
	Dennis Bergkamp	1	5	1	3	6	6	14
	Ronaldo	0	0	4	12	2	2	14
16	Jaap Stam	0	0	2	6	4	4	10
17	Roy Keane	1	5	1	3	1	1	9
	Michael Owen	1	5	1	3	1	1	9
19	Paolo Maldini	0	0	2	6	2	2	8
20	Gianfranco Zola	0	0	2	6	1	1	7
21	Oliver Bierhoff	1	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Alessandro Del Piero	1	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Paul Scholes	1	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Nwankwo Kanu	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
	Sinisa Mihajlovic	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
	Peter Schmeichel	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
27	Cuauhtemoc Blanco	0	0	1	3	1	1	4
	Edgar Davids	0	0	1	3	1	1	4
	Patrick Kluivert	0	0	1	3	1	1	4
	Luis Enrique	0	0	1	3	1	1	4
31	Michelle Akers	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Emerson	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Marc Overmars	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Fernando Redondo	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Alan Shearer	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Sun Wen	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Oliver Kahn	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
	Marcelo Salas	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
39	Claudio Lopez	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
40	Fabien Barthez	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Laurent Blanc	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Frank De Boer	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Josep Guardiola	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Harry Kewell	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Predrag Mijatovic	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Hidetoshi Nakata	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Pavel Nedved	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Juan Riquelme	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Javier Saviola	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Davor Suker	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Edwin Van der Sar	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Paulo Wanchope	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

HOW THE COACHES VOTED

COUNTRY	COACH	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Albania	Hito Hitaj (technical director)	Beckham	Rivaldo	Shevchenko
Algeria	Said Amara (technical director)	Beckham	Zidane	Rivaldo
Andorra	David Rodrigo	Figo	Rivaldo	Raul
Anguilla	Livingston Clifton	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Raul
Antigua/Barbuda	Vranes Zoran	Yorke	Roberto Carlos	Mijatovic
Argentina	Jose Pekerman	Rivaldo	Kluivert	Roberto Carlos
Armenia	Suren Barseghyan	Rivaldo	Beckham	Figo
Australia	Frank Farina	Beckham	Yorke	Rivaldo
Austria	Otto Baric	Rivaldo	Beckham	Kahn
Azerbaijan	Ahmed Aleskerov	Shevchenko	Cole	Kluivert
Bahamas	Peter Wilson	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Beckham
Bahrain	Salman A Sharida	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Barbados	Eyre Sealy	Batistuta	Beckham	Rivaldo
Belarus	Sergei Borovsky	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Shevchenko
Belgium	Robert Waseige	Rivaldo	Beckham	Figo
Belize	Manuel Reinaldo Bilches	Batistuta	Redondo	Wanchope
Bermuda	Clyde Best	Rivaldo	Figo	Beckham
Bolivia	Hector Veira	Rivaldo	Raul	Saviola
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Drago Smajlovic	Rivaldo	Beckham	Kahn
Botswana	Jochen Figge	Rivaldo	Owen	Matthaus
Brazil	Wanderley Luxemburgo	Raul	Cole	F De Boer
British Virgin Islands	Gregory Grant	Rivaldo	Akers	Yorke
Bulgaria	Dimitar Dimitrov	Rivaldo	Beckham	Zidane
Burkina Faso	Rene Taelman	Scholes	Rivaldo	Claudio Lopez
Cambodia	Yean Chheang	Rivaldo	Beckham	Batistuta
Cameroon	Pierre Lechantre	Beckham	Rivaldo	Blanc
Canada	Holger Osiek	Matthaus	Rivaldo	Kanu
Cape Verde Islands	Oscar Duarte	Rivaldo	Figo	Cole
Chile	Nelson Acosta	Rivaldo	Shevchenko	Mihajlovic
Cook Islands	Alex Napa	Roberto Carlos	Sun Wen	Vieri
Costa Rica	Marvin Rodriguez Ramirez	Owen	Ronaldo	Salas
Croatia	Miroslav Blazevic	Rivaldo	Matthaus	Maldini
Cuba	William Bennett Barrack	Rivaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Cyprus	Stavros Papadopoulos	Rivaldo	Zidane	Batistuta
Czech Republic	Jozef Chovanec	Rivaldo	Beckham	Figo
Denmark	Bo Johansson	Rivaldo	Beckham	Luis Enrique
Djibouti	Hassan Mohammed Amil	Beckham	Rivaldo	Vieri
Ecuador	Herman Dario Gomez	Rivaldo	Davids	Guardiola
Egypt	Gerard Gili	Rivaldo	Zidane	Barthez
England	Kevin Keegan	Rivaldo	Shevchenko	Vieri
Eritrea	Asefan Asmerom	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Beckham
Estonia	Teitur Thordarson	Rivaldo	Veron	Salas
Ethiopia	Seyoum Abate	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Kanu
Faroe Islands	Allan Simonsen	Keane	Figo	Schmeichel
Fiji	Billy Singh	Rivaldo	Keane	Yorke
Finland	Richard Moller Nielsen	Bierhoff	Zola	Schmeichel
France	Roger Lemerre	Rivaldo	Vieri	Beckham

THE FULL VOTE RESULTS

COUNTRY	COACH	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Georgia	–	Rivaldo	Beckham	Shevchenko
Germany	Erich Ribbeck	Rivaldo	Veron	Batistuta
Greece	Vasilis Daniel	Rivaldo	Zidane	Vieri
Grenada	Auster Debellotte	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Salas
Guam	William McFaul	Rivaldo	Beckham	Batistuta
Guatemala	Benjamin Monterroso	Rivaldo	Raul	Davids
Holland	Frank Rijkaard	Rivaldo	Veron	Claudio Lopez
Honduras	Ramon Enrique Maradiaga Chavez	Rivaldo	Raul	Figo
Hong Kong	–	Beckham	Vieri	Rivaldo
Hungary	Bertalan Bicskei	Figo	Raul	Batistuta
Iceland	Gudjon Thordarson	Rivaldo	Stam	Beckham
India	Sukhninder Singh	Rivaldo	Beckham	Stam
Iran	Jalal Talebi	Rivaldo	Beckham	Stam
Israel	Shlomo Scharf	Beckham	Rivaldo	Mihajlovic
Italy	Dino Zoff	Rivaldo	Shevchenko	Figo
Jamaica	Rene Simoes	Rivaldo	Veron	Yorke
Japan	Philippe Troussier	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Jordan	Mohammed Awad	Rivaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Kazakhstan	Vait Talgayev	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Kuwait	Dusan Uhrin	Rivaldo	Shevchenko	Nedved
Kyrgystan	Evgeniy Novikov	Shevchenko	Vieri	Nakata
Laos	Soutskhone Oudompet (U-20 coach)	Cole	Shearer	Owen
Latvia	Gary Johnson	Beckham	Rivaldo	Shevchenko
Lebanon	Bram Abraham	Beckham	Rivaldo	Batistuta
Liechtenstein	Ralf Loose	Zidane	Rivaldo	Matthaus
Lithuania	Robertas Tautkus	Rivaldo	Matthaus	Keane
Luxembourg	Paul Philipp	Rivaldo	Beckham	Figo
Macedonia	Dragan Kanatlarovski	Beckham	Rivaldo	Mihajlovic
Madagascar	Vincent Randriamirado (tech dir)	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Malawi	Jack Chamangwana	Zidane	Beckham	Kanu
Malaysia	Abdul Rahman Bin Ibrahim	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Figo
Maldives	Victor Stancuiescu	Rivaldo	Vieri	Cole
Malta	Josif Ilic	Rivaldo	Beckham	Mihajlovic
Mauritius	Cadruel Dorasami	Batistuta	Rivaldo	Cole
Moldova	Alexandr Matiura	Beckham	Rivaldo	Shevchenko
Mongolia	Ishdorj Otgonbayar	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Morocco	Henri Michel	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Vieri
Mozambique	Arnaldo Jose da Silva Salvado	Bergkamp	Rivaldo	Batistuta
Myanmar	Colin Murphy	Rivaldo	Beckham	Schmeichel
Namibia	Peter Ueberjahn	Beckham	Zidane	Kahn
New Zealand	Ken Dugdale	Rivaldo	Emerson	Kewell
Nicaragua	Mauricio Antonio Cruz Jiron	Rivaldo	Veron	Figo
Nigeria	Kasimano Laloko	Batistuta	Rivaldo	–
Northern Ireland	Lawrie McMenemy	Rivaldo	Vieri	Matthaus
Norway	Nils Johan Semb	Batistuta	Stam	Schmeichel
Oman	Abdul Rahim Slayeim Al Hajri	Rivaldo	Stam	Zola
Palestine	Nassar Azmi	Rivaldo	Luis Enrique	Bergkamp
Panama	Miguel Angel Mansilla	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Raul
Paraguay	Sergio Markarian	Rivaldo	Beckham	Riquelme
Peru	Francisco Maturana	Rivaldo	Cole	Raul
Philippines	Juan Cutillas	Rivaldo	Figo	Zidane
Poland	Janusz Wojcik	Rivaldo	Raul	Maldini
Portugal	Humberto Coelho	Rivaldo	Raul	Bergkamp
Puerto Rico	Jose Lopez Perol	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Bergkamp
Qatar	Dzemal Hadziabdic	Zidane	Rivaldo	Bergkamp
Republic of Ireland	Mick McCarthy	Rivaldo	Beckham	Stam
Romania	Emerich Jenei	Rivaldo	Beckham	Figo
Russia	Oleg Romantsev	Zidane	Rivaldo	Veron
San Marino	Gianpaolo Mazza	Vieri	Rivaldo	Raul
Saudi Arabia	Milan Macala	Rivaldo	Beckham	Batistuta
Scotland	Craig Brown	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Shevchenko
Senegal	Peter Schnittger	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Beckham
Seychelles	Gardasevia Voyislav-Voyo	Beckham	Rivaldo	Vieri
Singapore	Vincent Subramaniam	Rivaldo	Bergkamp	Schmeichel
Slovakia	Jozef Adamec	Rivaldo	Cole	Batistuta
Slovenia	Srecko Katanec	Rivaldo	Ronaldo	Mihajlovic
Somalia	Hussein Ali Abdullah	Zidane	Rivaldo	Beckham
South Korea	Huh Jung-moo	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
Spain	Jose Antonio Camacho	Del Piero	Rivaldo	Roberto Carlos
Sri Lanka	M. Karathu	Zidane	Overmars	Ronaldo
Sudan	Ahmed Babirar El Fari	Rivaldo	Ronaldo	Blanco
Swaziland	Francis Banda	Rivaldo	Beckham	Kanu
Sweden	Tommy Soderberg	Rivaldo	Raul	Bergkamp
Switzerland	Gilbert Gress	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Beckham
Syria	Mohammed Mobaid	Rivaldo	Figo	Beckham
Tahiti	Richard Vansam	Beckham	Rivaldo	Shevchenko
Taiwan	Chiang Mu-tsai	Beckham	Rivaldo	Kanu
Tajikistan	Babaev Zoir	Zidane	Rivaldo	Suker
Thailand	Peter Withe	Rivaldo	Yorke	Zidane
Tonga	Uame Toluta'u	Zidane	Ronaldo	Bergkamp
Trinidad & Tobago	Bertille St Clair	Rivaldo	Blanco	Beckham
Tunisia	Francesco Scoglio	Rivaldo	Vieri	Beckham
Turkey	Mustafa Denizli	Roberto Carlos	Rivaldo	Van der Sar
Turkmenistan	Rovshan Muhadou	Shevchenko	Rivaldo	Beckham
Ukraine	Jozhef Szabo	Beckham	Batistuta	Zidane
USA	Bruce Arena	Rivaldo	Beckham	Vieri
US Virgin Islands	Paul Inurie	Yorke	Rivaldo	Ronaldo
Uzbekistan	Rahimov Mahmud	Beckham	Vieri	Cole
Venezuela	Jose Omar Pastoriza	Rivaldo	Batistuta	Veron
Vietnam	Alfred Riedl	Rivaldo	Beckham	Stam
Yemen	Salem Abdul-Rahman	Beckham	Rivaldo	Figo
Yugoslavia	Vujadin Boskov	Rivaldo	Maldini	Zidane
Zambia	Benson Bamfuchile	Rivaldo	Cole	Zidane

SPAIN

Saturday, January 8

Espanyol 0
La Coruna 0 Att: 10,800

Sunday, January 9

Alaves 1 (Julio Salinas pen 25)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (J Etxeberria 30, Larrazabal pen 63) Att: 17,000

Atletico Madrid 1 (Hasselbaink pen 48)
Mallorca 0 Att: 35,000

Betis Sevilla 1 (Alfonso 25)
Numancia 2 (Barbu pen 56, Ojeda 88) Att: 45,000

Celta Vigo 0
Barcelona 2 (Figo 1, Rivaldo 89) Att: 29,000

Racing Santander 2 (Salva pen 38, 67)
Malaga 3 (Valcarce 5, Edgar 78, Catanha 88) Att: 13,000

Rayo Vallecano 2 (Clotet 4, Bolo 62)
Sevilla 0 Att: 8,500

Real Sociedad 0
Oviedo 0 Att: 22,140

Zaragoza 4 (Juanele 25, 67, Milosevic 31, Radimov 58)
Valencia 2 (Mendieta pen 22, 66) Att: 25,000

Saturday, January 15

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Llorens pen 33)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Aguilera 28) Att: 9,000

Sunday, January 16

Alaves 2 (Julio Salinas pen 36, Javi Moreno 88)
La Coruna 1 (Makaay 50) Att: 17,000

Betis Sevilla 2 (Ito 3, 74)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Larrazabal pen 63) Att: 45,000

Celta Vigo 5 (Turdo 1, 23, 46, Mostovoi 15, Revivo 38)
Oviedo 3 (Dely Valdes 34, 66, Bango 37) Att: 22,000

Espanyol 0
Malaga 2 (Dario Silva 70, Rufete 73) Att: 20,000

Racing Santander 1 (Salva pen 90)
Valencia 1 (Mendieta pen 34) Att: 15,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Guerrero 90)
Sevilla 1 (Quevedo 25) Att: 23,197

Valladolid 2 (Rodrigo 55, Victor 71)
Numancia 0 Att: 16,000

Zaragoza 0
Barcelona 0 Att: 33,000

Monday, January 17

Real Madrid 2 (Raul 83, Roberto Carlos 90)
Mallorca 1 (Romerito 38) Att: 65,000

Saturday, January 22

La Coruna 2 (Pauleta 42, Makaay 90)
Betis Sevilla 0 Att: 18,000

Sunday, January 23

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Carlos Garcia 18)
Valladolid 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 1 (Hasselbaink 17)
Real Sociedad 1 (Jankauskas 63) Att: 30,000

Barcelona 1 (Rivaldo 18)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 60,000

Malaga 0
Alaves 1 (Azkoitia 4) Att: 25,000

Mallorca 2 (David 21, Diego Tristan pen 89)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Canabal 63) Att: 15,000

Numancia 0
Real Madrid 0 Att: 10,000

Oviedo 1 (Dely Valdes pen 63)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 11,000

Sevilla 0
Celta Vigo 1 (McCarthy 84) Att: 30,000

Valencia 1 (Kily Gonzalez 29)
Espanyol 2 (Benitez 15, Arteaga 52) Att: 45,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
La Coruna	21	12	4	5	36	24	40
Barcelona	21	11	4	6	42	27	37
Zaragoza	21	9	8	4	36	21	35
Celta Vigo	21	11	2	8	31	27	35
Athletic Bilbao	21	8	8	5	31	30	32
Alaves	21	9	5	7	25	24	32
Rayo Vallecano	21	9	3	9	30	30	30
Mallorca	21	8	5	8	28	27	29
Numancia	21	7	7	7	28	33	28
Valencia	21	7	6	8	28	24	27
Malaga	21	7	6	8	33	32	27
Real Madrid	19	6	9	4	31	30	27
Espanyol	21	7	5	9	31	32	26
Betis Sevilla	20	8	2	10	19	32	26
Atletico Madrid	21	7	4	10	33	35	25
Valladolid	20	6	6	8	18	24	24
Oviedo	21	6	6	9	22	34	24
Racing Santander	21	5	8	8	32	32	23
Real Sociedad	21	4	10	7	22	26	22
Sevilla	21	3	8	10	22	34	17

LEADING GOALSCORERS
21 Salva (Racing Santander)
18 Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid)
18 Savo Milosevic (Zaragoza)
15 Catanha (Malaga)
11 Roy Makaay (La Coruna)
11 Raul (Real Madrid)
10 Diego Tristan (Mallorca)
9 Rivaldo (Barcelona)
8 Victor Fernandez (Valladolid)
8 Pauleta (La Coruna)

SPANISH CUP – 3RD RND, 2ND LEGS

Jan 12: Alaves 2 Real Union 1
Agg 2-2. Real Union on away goals;
Atletico Madrid 1 Las Palmas 0
Atletico Madrid 3-2 on agg;
Barcelona 2 Almeria 0
Barcelona 2-0 on agg;
Celta Vigo 4 Sporting Gijon 2
Celta Vigo 7-2 on agg;
Compostela 2 Tenerife 0
Compostela 4-2 on agg;
Eibar 1 Lleida 1
Agg 1-1. Lleida on away goals;
Espanyol 2 Albacete 0
Espanyol 2-0 on agg;
Malaga 2 La Coruna 1
Agg 2-2. La Coruna on away goals;
Santander 1 Zaragoza 4
Zaragoza 6-2 on agg;
Rayo Vallecano 0 Athletic Bilbao 0
Rayo Vallecano 1-0 on agg;
Mallorca 1 Ourense 2
Ourense 4-3 on agg;
Betis Sevilla 0 Merida 1
Merida 2-0 on agg;
Oviedo 2 Logrones 1
Agg 4-4. Oviedo on away goals;
Valencia 2 Osasuna 0
Osasuna 3-2 on agg;
Villarreal 1 Barakaldo 0
Villarreal 1-0 on agg.

4TH RND – 1ST LEGS

Jan 19: Compostela 3 Villarreal 0;
Espanyol 2 Celta Vigo 1;
Lleida 2 Rayo Vallecano 3;
Merida 1 Oviedo 0;
Osasuna 1 La Coruna 0;
Real Union 0 Atletico Madrid 3;
Zaragoza 0 Real Madrid 0.
Jan 20: Ourense 1 Barcelona 2.

SWITZERLAND

1ST STAGE FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Gallen	22	13	6	3	42	25	45
Basle	22	9	10	3	31	21	37
Lausanne	22	9	9	4	35	25	36
Grasshopper	22	9	7	6	40	25	34
Yverdon	22	7	9	6	28	25	30
Lucerne	22	8	4	10	28	29	28
Servette	22	8	4	10	32	36	28
Zurich	22	6	9	7	22	27	27
Neuchatel Xamax	22	6	8	8	32	34	26
Aarau	22	7	5	10	30	42	26
Lugano	22	5	6	11	26	34	21
Delemont	22	4	5	13	24	48	17

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Charles Amoah (St Gallen)
12 Rainer Bieli (Neuchatel Xamax)
12 Efan Ekoku (Grasshopper)
10 Ruben Ivanov (Aarau)
9 Marcin Kuzba (Lausanne)

TURKEY

Jan 7: Besiktas 2 Goztepe 1.
Jan 8: Denizlispor 1 Bursaspor 3; Erzurum 1 Samsunspor 0; Genclerbirligi 2 Fenerbahce 2; Altay 2 Adanaspor 1.
Jan 9: Istanbulspor 2 Ankaragucu 6; Vanspor 2 Antalyaspor 4; Trabzonspor 0 Gaziantepspor 0; Kocaelispor 1 Galatasaray 2.
Jan 14: Samsunspor 0 Trabzonspor 0.
Jan 15: Ankaragucu 1 Gaziantepspor 1; Bursaspor 3 Vanspor 2; Antalyaspor 3 Kocaelispor 0; Galatasaray 3 Altay 1.
Jan 16: Goztepe 2 Denizlispor 4; Erzurum 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Fenerbahce 2 Besiktas 1; Adanaspor 2 Istanbulspor 1.
Jan 21: Denizlispor 1 Fenerbahce 1.
Jan 22: Gaziantepspor 1 Adanaspor 1.
Jan 23: Genclerbirligi 1 Samsunspor 0; Istanbulspor 0 Galatasaray 0; Altay 2 Antalyaspor 0; Trabzonspor 3 Ankaragucu 1; Kocaelispor 3 Bursaspor 2; Besiktas 2 Erzurum 0.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	17	13	3	1	36	14	42
Besiktas	17	9	4	4	31	12	31
Gaziantepspor	17	8	6	3	24	13	30
Fenerbahce	17	7	8	2	29	18	29
Denizlispor	17	7	6	4	29	25	27
Trabzonspor	17	6	7	4	22	17	25
Altay	17	7	4	6	23	19	25
Antalyaspor	17	7	3	7	24	31	24
Genclerbirligi	17	6	5	6	20	23	23
Adanaspor	17	6	4	7	25	26	22
Ankaragucu	17	6	4	7	25	29	22
Samsunspor	17	6	3	8	20	22	21
Istanbulspor	17	4	7	6	19	24	19
Erzurum	17	5	4	8	20	29	19
Goztepe	16	4	5	7	15	22	17
Bursaspor	17	4	4	9	21	26	16
Kocaelispor	17	3	3	11	18	37	12
Vanspor	16	2	4	10	17	31	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Cafer Aydin (Ankaragucu; 3 for Adanaspor)
13 Serkan Aykut (Samsunspor)
11 Ahmet Dursun (Besiktas)
10 Viorel Moldovan (Fenerbahce)
9 Elvir Bolic (Fenerbahce)
8 Fazli Ulusal (Antalyaspor)
8 Desire M'Bonabucya (Gaziantepspor)

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	15	13	2	0	37	6	41
Kryvbas	15	9	4	2	26	14	31
Shakhtar	15	9	2	4	21	8	29
Vorskla	15	8	3	4	31	18	27
Karpaty	15	8	0	7	27	21	24
Metalist	15	7	3	5	21	19	24
Metalurh Z	15	6	5	4	19	16	23
Metalurh D	15	5	5	5	20	18	20
Metalurh M	15	6	1	8	26	24	19
CSKA	15	4	6	5	17	16	18
Tavriya	15	4	4	7	19	24	16
Dnipro	15	4	4	7	13	29	16
Prykarpattya	15	2	6	7	11	23	12
Chornomorets	15	3	3	9	7	27	12
Nyva	15	2	5	8	20	32	11
Zirka	15	0	7	8	8	28	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Serhii Rebrov (Dynamo)
7 Ivan Getsko (Karpaty)
6 Konstantin Babich (Metalurh M)
6 Vitaly Kobzar (Vorskla)
6 Volodymyr Mazyar (Vorskla)
6 Serhiy Shishchenko (Metalurh D)
5 Olexander Gaidash (Tavriya)
5 Alexei Osipov (Tavriya)
5 Valentin Poltavets (Metalurh Z)

WALES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barry	21	13	4	4	60	22	43
Llanelli	19	13	2	4	50	24	41
Carmarthen	20	12	3	5	36	23	39
Cwmbran	19	11	5	3	35	18	38
TNS Llansantffraid	19	12	2	5	38	27	38
Bangor	20	11	1	8	36	35	34
Connah's Quay	20	9	4	7	38	24	31
Aberystwyth	18	9	3	6	39	30	30
Newtown	20	7	5	8	23	19	26
Caersws	20	6	6	8	28	28	24
Cefn Druids	21	8	0	13	24	39	24
Afan Lido	17	5	5	7	18	23	20
Inter Cable-Tel	18	5	5	8	17	25	20
Haverfordwest	19	4	6	9	24	40	18
Rhyl	18	5	3	10	17	41	18
Conwy	14	4	2	8	23	40	14
Rhayader	20	2	6	12	13	34	12
Caernarfon	19	1	6	12	13	40	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Mark Dickeson (Llanelli)
12 Paul Evans (Barry)
11 Justin Perry (Barry)
11 Paul Roberts (Bangor)
11 Chris Summers (Cwmbran)
10 Mike Davies (Cefn Druids)
10 Richard Jones (Barry)

YUGOSLAVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Obilic	20	17	2	1	39	12	53
Partizan	20	16	3	1	49	17	51
Red Star	20	14	5	1	45	13	47
Milicionar	20	9	4	7	32	25	31
Rad	20	8	6	6	31	25	30
Zeleznik	20	8	5	7	25	21	29
Sutjeska	20	8	4	8	28	33	28
Buducnost	19	8	3	8	23	21	27
OFK	20	7	6	7	29	31	27
Vojvodina	20	8	2	10	27	27	26
Radnicki K	20	7	5	8	19	25	26
Cukaricki	19	7	4	8	21	24	25
Zemun	20	7	4	9	27	34	25
Radnicki N	20	7	2	11	26	30	23
Hajduk K	20	6	5	9	17	21	23
Proleter	20	5	8	7	17	22	23
Hajduk B	20	7	2	11	31	39	23
Mogren	20	6	4	10	18	33	22
Spartak	20	4	5	11	13	33	17
Sartid	20	4	4	12	18	29	16
Borac	20	3	3	14	25	45	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Bogic Popovic (Hajduk B)
13 Sasa Ilic (Partizan)
12 Mateja Kezman (Partizan)
10 Branko Jelic (Red Star)
10 Malesija Vojvoda (Radnicki N)
10 Milan Radojicic (Milicionar)
9 Nemanja Dancetovic (Milicionar)
9 Mihajlo Pjanovic (Red Star)
9 Gabrijel Radojicic (Obilic)

SOUTH AMERICA

MERCONORTE CUP

FINAL – 2ND LEG

Dec 22 - Santa Fe
Independiente Santa Fe (Col) 0
America Cali (Col) 1 (Castillo 65)
Agg 2-2. America 5-3 on pens

LIBERTADORES CUP

THE DRAW

Top two from each group go through to the knockout stage

Group 1: Alianza Lima (Per), Atletico Paranaense (Bra), Emelec (Ecu), Nacional (Uru).
Group 2: Universidad Catolica (Chl), Penarol (Uru), Blooming (Bol), Boca Juniors (Arg).
Group 3: America (Mex), Corinthians (Bra), LDU Quito (Ecu), Olimpia (Par).
Group 4: Universidad de Chile, Atletico Nacional (Col), Atlas (Mex), River Plate (Arg).
Group 5: San Lorenzo (Arg), Universitario (Per), Cerro Porteno (Par), Atletico Junior (Col).
Group 6: Atletico Colegiales (Par), America (Col), Rosario Central (Arg), Sporting Cristal (Per).
Group 7: Palmeiras (Bra), The Strongest (Bol), Juventude (Bra), El Nacional (Ecu).
Group 8: Atletico Mineiro (Bra), Bolivar (Bol), Bella Vista Montevideo (Uru), Cobreloa (Chl).

Groups are scheduled to kick off on February 16.

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 23: Trujillanos 0 Zulianos 0; Caracas 1 FCU-ULA 0; Estudiantes 1 Nacional 0; Carabobo 3 Mineros Guayana 0.

VENEZUELA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carabobo	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Caracas	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Estudiantes	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Trujillanos	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Zulianos	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ital-Chacao	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llaneros	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dep Tachira	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter El Vigia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nacional	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
FCU-ULA	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Mineros Guayana	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 15: Toluca 1 Tecos UAG 0; Monterrey 2 Pachuca 1; Atletico Celaya 2 Puebla 1; Atlas 0 Tigres 4.
Jan 16: Guadalajara 4 Atletico Morelia 1; Leon 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Toros Neza 0 America 5; Atlante 1 Santos 2.
Jan 21: Tecos UAG 0 Monterrey 1.
Jan 22: Necaxa 2 Toros Neza 1; Puebla 2 Leon 1; Tigres 0 Atletico Celaya 0.
Jan 23: Atletico Morelia 3 Atlante 1; Pachuca 3 Cruz Azul 2; Pumas UNAM 0 Guadalajara 0; Santos 4 Toluca 2; America 4 Atlas 1.
Jan 26: Cruz Azul 0 Necaxa 3.

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Pumas UNAM	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Leon	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Tecos UAG	2	0	0	2	0	2	0
Toros Neza	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Atletico Celaya	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Puebla	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Atletico Morelia	2	1	0	1	4	5	3
Cruz Azul	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	2	2	0	0	9	1	6
Santos Laguna	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Atlante	2	0	0	2	2	5	0
Atlas	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Necaxa	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Tigres	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Guadalajara	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Pachuca	2	1	0	1	4	4	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS

3 Claudio Nunez (Tigres)
3 Marcelo de Faria (America)
3 Jared Borguetti (Santos)
2 Cuauhtemoc Blanco (America)
2 Omar Gomez (Monterrey)

ASIA

JAPAN

EMPEROR'S CUP – QUARTER-FINALS

Dec 23: Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Jubilo Iwata 0; Kashiwa Reysol 2 Montedio Yamagata 0; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 Shimizu S-Pulse 0; Yokohama F Marinos 0 Verdy Kawasaki 1.

SEMI-FINALS

Dec 26: Nagoya Grampus Eight 2 Kashiwa Reysol 0; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 7 Verdy Kawasaki 2.

FINAL

Jan 1
Nagoya Grampus Eight 2 (Lopes 57, Stojkovic 82)
Sanfrecce Hiroshima 0

WORLD CUP 2002 DRAW

AFRICA

5 teams qualify

FIRST ROUND

Cape Verde Islands v Algeria;
Mauritania v Tunisia;
Benin v Senegal;
Guinea-Bissau v Togo;
Gambia v Morocco;
Lesotho v South Africa;
Swaziland v Angola;
Botswana v Zambia;
Madagascar v Gabon;
Sudan v Mozambique;
Equatorial Guinea v Congo;
Libya v Mali;
Rwanda v Ivory Coast;
Sao Tome e Principe v Sierra Leone;
Central African Republic v Zimbabwe;
Seychelles v Namibia;
Djibouti v DR Congo;
Somalia v Cameroon;
Mauritius v Egypt;
Eritrea v Nigeria;
Chad v Liberia;
Uganda v Guinea;
Ethiopia v Burkina Faso;
Malawi v Kenya;
Tanzania v Ghana
Winners qualify for second round

ASIA

2 or 3 qualify, plus hosts Japan and South Korea

FIRST ROUND

10 groups of four teams, played in a round-robin format. Group winners qualify for second round

Group 1

Oman, Syria, Laos, Philippines

Group 2

Iran, Tajikistan, Myanmar, Guam

Group 3

Qatar, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Palestine

Group 4

Kuwait, Singapore, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan

Group 5

Thailand, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Pakistan

Group 6

Iraq, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Macao

Group 7

Uzbekistan, Jordan, Turkmenistan, Taiwan

Group 8

United Arab Emirates, India, Yemen, Brunei

Group 9

China, Indonesia, Maldives, Cambodia

Group 10

Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Mongolia

EUROPE

13 or 14 teams qualify, plus holders France

Group 1

Yugoslavia, Russia, Switzerland, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Faroe Islands

Group 2

Holland, Portugal, Rep Ireland, Cyprus, Andorra, Estonia

16.08.00.....Estonia-Andorra
02.09.00.....Andorra-Cyprus
02.09.00.....Holland-Rep of Ireland
03.09.00.....Estonia-Portugal
07.10.00.....Andorra-Estonia
07.10.00.....Cyprus-Holland
07.10.00.....Portugal-Rep of Ireland
11.10.00.....Holland-Portugal
11.10.00.....Rep of Ireland-Estonia
15.11.00.....Cyprus-Andorra
14.02.01.....Portugal-Andorra
24.03.01.....Andorra-Holland
24.03.01.....Cyprus-Rep of Ireland
28.03.01.....Andorra-Rep of Ireland
28.03.01.....Cyprus-Estonia
28.03.01.....Portugal-Holland
25.04.01.....Holland-Cyprus
25.04.01.....Rep of Ireland-Andorra
02.06.01.....Estonia-Holland
02.06.01.....Rep of Ireland-Portugal
06.06.01.....Estonia-Rep of Ireland
06.06.01.....Portugal-Cyprus
15.08.01.....Estonia-Cyprus
01.09.01.....Andorra-Portugal
01.09.01.....Rep of Ireland-Holland
05.09.01.....Cyprus-Portugal
05.09.01.....Holland-Estonia
06.10.01.....Holland-Andorra
06.10.01.....Portugal-Estonia
06.10.01.....Rep of Ireland-Cyprus

Group 3

Czech Republic, Denmark, Bulgaria, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Malta

02.09.00.....Bulgaria-Czech Republic
02.09.00.....Iceland-Denmark
02.09.00.....Northern Ireland-Malta
07.10.00.....Bulgaria-Malta
07.10.00.....Czech Republic-Iceland
07.10.00.....Northern Ireland-Denmark
11.10.00.....Denmark-Bulgaria
11.10.00.....Iceland-Northern Ireland
11.10.00.....Malta-Czech Republic
24.03.01.....Bulgaria-Iceland
24.03.01.....Malta-Denmark
24.03.01.....Northern Ireland-Czech Republic
28.03.01.....Bulgaria-Northern Ireland
28.03.01.....Czech Republic-Denmark
25.04.01.....Malta-Iceland
02.06.01.....Denmark-Czech Republic
02.06.01.....Iceland-Malta
02.06.01.....Northern Ireland-Bulgaria
06.06.01.....Czech Republic-Northern Ireland
06.06.01.....Denmark-Malta
06.06.01.....Iceland-Bulgaria
01.09.01.....Denmark-Northern Ireland
01.09.01.....Iceland-Czech Republic
01.09.01.....Malta-Bulgaria
05.09.01.....Bulgaria-Denmark
05.09.01.....Czech Republic-Malta
05.09.01.....Northern Ireland-Iceland
06.10.01.....Czech Republic-Bulgaria
06.10.01.....Denmark-Iceland
06.10.01.....Malta-Northern Ireland

Group 4

Sweden, Turkey, Slovakia, Macedonia, Azerbaijan, Moldova

Group 5

Norway, Ukraine, Poland, Wales, Armenia, Belarus

Group 6

Belgium, Scotland, Croatia, Latvia, San Marino

Group 7

Spain, Austria, Israel, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Liechtenstein

Group 8

Romania, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, Georgia

Group 9

Germany, England, Greece, Finland, Albania

02.09.00.....Finland-Albania
02.09.00.....Germany-Greece
07.10.00.....England-Germany
07.10.00.....Greece-Finland
11.10.00.....Albania-Greece
11.10.00.....Finland-England
24.03.01.....England-Finland
24.03.01.....Germany-Albania
28.03.01.....Albania-England
28.03.01.....Greece-Germany
02.06.01.....Finland-Germany
02.06.01.....Greece-Albania
06.06.01.....Albania-Germany
06.06.01.....Greece-England
01.09.01.....Albania-Finland
01.09.01.....Germany-England
05.09.01.....England-Albania
05.09.01.....Finland-Greece
06.10.01.....England-Greece
06.10.01.....Germany-Finland

Group winners qualify automatically. Nine group runners-up and third-place Asian team play off for five remaining places.

OCEANIA

0 or 1 teams qualify

FIRST ROUND

Group 1

Australia, Tonga, Fiji, American Samoa, Samoa

Group 2

New Zealand, Tahiti, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Cook Islands

Two group winners qualify for the second round.

SOUTH AMERICA

4 or 5 teams qualify

Round-robin league system. Top four teams qualify automatically. Fifth-placed team play off against Oceania qualifier

28.03.00 .....Uruguay-Bolivia
28.03.00 .....Colombia-Brazil
28.03.00 .....Peru-Paraguay
28.03.00 .....Argentina-Chile
28.03.00 .....Ecuador-Venezuela
25.04.00 .....Venezuela-Argentina
25.04.00 .....Brazil-Ecuador
25.04.00 .....Paraguay-Uruguay
25.04.00 .....Chile-Peru
25.04.00 .....Bolivia-Colombia
03.06.00 .....Peru-Brazil
03.06.00 .....Argentina-Bolivia
03.06.00 .....Paraguay-Ecuador
03.06.00 .....Uruguay-Chile
03.06.00 .....Colombia-Venezuela
28.06.00 .....Brazil-Uruguay
28.06.00 .....Colombia-Argentina
28.06.00 .....Venezuela-Bolivia
28.06.00 .....Chile-Paraguay
28.06.00 .....Ecuador-Peru
18.07.00 .....Paraguay-Brazil
18.07.00 .....Argentina-Ecuador
18.07.00 .....Bolivia-Chile
18.07.00 .....Peru-Colombia
18.07.00 .....Uruguay-Venezuela
25.07.00 .....Brazil-Argentina
25.07.00 .....Bolivia-Paraguay
25.07.00 .....Venezuela-Chile
25.07.00 .....Uruguay-Peru
25.07.00 .....Ecuador-Colombia
15.08.00 .....Colombia-Uruguay
15.08.00 .....Chile-Brazil
15.08.00 .....Ecuador-Bolivia
15.08.00 .....Argentina-Paraguay
15.08.00 .....Peru-Venezuela
02.09.00 .....Peru-Argentina
02.09.00 .....Brazil-Bolivia
02.09.00 .....Uruguay-Ecuador
02.09.00 .....Chile-Colombia
02.09.00 .....Paraguay-Venezuela
07.10.00 ....Argentina-Uruguay
07.10.00 .....Venezuela-Brazil
07.10.00 .....Colombia-Paraguay
07.10.00 .....Ecuador-Chile
07.10.00 .....Bolivia-Peru
14.11.00 .....Bolivia-Uruguay
14.11.00 .....Brazil-Colombia
14.11.00 .....Paraguay-Peru
14.11.00 .....Chile-Argentina
14.11.00 .....Venezuela-Ecuador
27.03.01 .....Argentina-Venezuela
27.03.01 .....Ecuador-Brazil
27.03.01 .....Uruguay-Paraguay
27.03.01 .....Peru-Chile
27.03.01 .....Colombia-Bolivia
24.04.01 .....Brazil-Peru
24.04.01 .....Bolivia-Argentina
24.04.01 .....Ecuador-Paraguay
24.04.01 .....Chile-Uruguay
24.04.01 .....Venezuela-Colombia
02.06.01 .....Uruguay-Brazil
02.06.01 .....Argentina-Colombia
02.06.01 .....Bolivia-Venezuela
02.06.01 .....Paraguay-Chile
02.06.01 .....Peru-Ecuador
14.08.01 .....Brazil-Paraguay
14.08.01 .....Ecuador-Argentina
14.08.01 .....Chile-Bolivia
14.08.01 .....Colombia-Peru
14.08.01 .....Venezuela-Uruguay
04.09.01 .....Argentina-Brazil
04.09.01 .....Paraguay-Bolivia
04.09.01 .....Chile-Venezuela
04.09.01 .....Peru-Uruguay
04.09.01 .....Colombia-Ecuador
06.10.01 .....Uruguay-Colombia
06.10.01 .....Brazil-Chile
06.10.01 .....Bolivia-Ecuador
06.10.01 .....Paraguay-Argentina
06.10.01 .....Venezuela-Peru
07.11.01 .....Argentina-Peru
07.11.01 .....Bolivia-Brazil
07.11.01 .....Ecuador-Uruguay
07.11.01 .....Colombia-Chile
07.11.01 .....Venezuela-Paraguay
13.11.01 .....Uruguay-Argentina
13.11.01 .....Brazil-Venezuela
13.11.01 .....Paraguay-Colombia
13.11.01 .....Chile-Ecuador
13.11.01 .....Peru-Bolivia

CONCACAF

3 teams qualify

PRELIMINARY PHASE

Central American Zone Group A

El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala

Central American Zone Group B

Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama

Group winners qualify for semi-final round. Group runners-up play off against Pool 2 & 3 runners-up from Caribbean Zone.

Caribbean Zone First round

Pool 1: Cuba, Cayman Islands, St Lucia, Surinam, Aruba, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Grenada

Pool 2: St. Vincent, US Virgin Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, Turks and Caicos Islands, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda

Pool 3: Trinidad & Tobago, Dutch Antilles, Dominican Republic, Montserrat, Dominica, Haiti, Anguilla, Bahamas

Group winners qualify for semi-final round. Pool 1 runners-up play off against Canada for place in semi-finals; Pool 2 & 3 runners-up play-off against runners-up from Central American section.

Byes to semi-final round: *Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, USA*

FIXTURES

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday, February 13

Belgrano Cordoba v Lanus
Estudiantes v Argentinos Juniors
Colon Santa Fe v Velez Sarsfield
Rosario Central v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Instituto Cordoba v River Plate
San Lorenzo v Newell's Old Boys
Ferro Carril Oeste v Union Santa Fe
Chacarita Juniors v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Racing Club v Talleres Cordoba
Independiente v Boca Juniors

Sunday, February 20

Talleres Cordoba v Chacarita Juniors
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Ferro Carril Oeste
Union Santa Fe v San Lorenzo
Newell's Old Boys v Instituto Cordoba
Racing Club v Boca Juniors
River Plate v Rosario Central
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Colon Santa Fe
Velez Sarsfield v Estudiantes
Argentinos Juniors v Belgrano Cordoba
Lanus v Independiente

Sunday, February 27

Boca Juniors v Lanus
Independiente v Argentinos Juniors
Belgrano Cordoba v Velez Sarsfield
Estudiantes v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Colon Santa Fe v River Plate
Rosario Central v Newell's Old Boys
Instituto Cordoba v Union Santa Fe
San Lorenzo v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Ferro Carril Oeste v Talleres Cordoba
Chacarita Juniors v Racing Club

Sunday, March 5

Argentinos Juniors v Lanus
Racing Club v Ferro Carril Oeste
Talleres Cordoba v San Lorenzo
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Instituto Cordoba
Chacarita Juniors v Boca Juniors
Union Santa Fe v Rosario Central
Newell's Old Boys v Colon Santa Fe
River Plate v Estudiantes
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Belgrano Cordoba
Velez Sarsfield v Independiente

Sunday, March 12

Ferro Carril Oeste v Chacarita Juniors
Boca Juniors v Argentinos Juniors
Lanus v Velez Sarsfield
Independiente v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Belgrano Cordoba v River Plate
Estudiantes v Newell's Old Boys
Colon Santa Fe v Union Santa Fe
Rosario Central v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Instituto Cordoba v Talleres Cordoba
San Lorenzo v Racing Club

Sunday, March 19

Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Lanus
Velez Sarsfield v Argentinos Juniors
Chacarita Juniors v San Lorenzo
Racing Club v Instituto Cordoba
Ferro Carril Oeste v Boca Juniors
Talleres Cordoba v Rosario Central
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Colon Santa Fe
Union Santa Fe v Estudiantes
Newell's Old Boys v Belgrano Cordoba
River Plate v Independiente

Sunday, April 2

Instituto Cordoba v Chacarita Juniors
San Lorenzo v Ferro Carril Oeste
Boca Juniors v Velez Sarsfield
Argentinos Juniors v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Lanus v River Plate
Independiente v Newell's Old Boys
Belgrano Cordoba v Union Santa Fe
Estudiantes v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Colon Santa Fe v Talleres Cordoba
Rosario Central v Racing Club

Sunday, April 9

Newell's Old Boys v Lanus
River Plate v Argentinos Juniors
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Velez Sarsfield
Ferro Carril Oeste v Instituto Cordoba
San Lorenzo v Boca Juniors
Chacarita Juniors v Rosario Central
Racing Club v Colon Santa Fe
Talleres Cordoba v Estudiantes
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Belgrano Cordoba
Union Santa Fe v Independiente

Sunday, April 16

Colon Santa Fe v Chacarita Juniors
Rosario Central v Ferro Carril Oeste
Instituto Cordoba v San Lorenzo
Boca Juniors v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Velez Sarsfield v River Plate
Argentinos Juniors v Newell's Old Boys
Lanus v Union Santa Fe
Independiente v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Belgrano Cordoba v Talleres Cordoba
Estudiantes v Racing Club

Sunday, April 30

Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Lanus
Union Santa Fe v Argentinos Juniors
Newell's Old Boys v Velez Sarsfield
River Plate v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Instituto Cordoba v Boca Juniors
San Lorenzo v Rosario Central
Ferro Carril Oeste v Colon Santa Fe
Chacarita Juniors v Estudiantes
Racing Club v Belgrano Cordoba
Talleres Cordoba v Independiente

Sunday, May 7

Belgrano Cordoba v Chacarita Juniors
Estudiantes v Ferro Carril Oeste
Colon Santa Fe v San Lorenzo
Rosario Central v Instituto Cordoba
Boca Juniors v River Plate
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Newell's Old Boys
Velez Sarsfield v Union Santa Fe
Argentinos Juniors v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Lanus v Talleres Cordoba
Independiente v Racing Club

Sunday, May 14

Racing Club v Lanus
Talleres Cordoba v Argentinos Juniors
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Velez Sarsfield
Union Santa Fe v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Newell's Old Boys v River Plate
Boca Juniors v Rosario Central
Instituto Cordoba v Colon Santa Fe
San Lorenzo v Estudiantes
Ferro Carril Oeste v Belgrano Cordoba
Chacarita Juniors v Independiente

Sunday, May 21

Lanus v Chacarita Juniors
Independiente v Ferro Carril Oeste
Belgrano Cordoba v San Lorenzo
Estudiantes v Instituto Cordoba
Newell's Old Boys v Boca Juniors
Colon Santa Fe v Rosario Central
River Plate v Union Santa Fe
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Velez Sarsfield v Talleres Cordoba
Argentinos Juniors v Racing Club

Fixtures for Round 14 unavailable at press time

Sunday, June 11

Velez Sarsfield v Chacarita Juniors
Argentinos Juniors v Ferro Carril Oeste
Lanus v San Lorenzo
Independiente v Instituto Cordoba
Union Santa Fe v Boca Juniors
Belgrano Cordoba v Rosario Central
Estudiantes v Colon Santa Fe
Newell's Old Boys v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
River Plate v Talleres Cordoba
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Racing Club

Sunday, June 18

Instituto Cordoba v Lanus
San Lorenzo v Argentinos Juniors
Ferro Carril Oeste v Velez Sarsfield
Chacarita Juniors v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Racing Club v River Plate
Talleres Cordoba v Newell's Old Boys
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Union Santa Fe
Boca Juniors v Estudiantes
Colon Santa Fe v Belgrano Cordoba
Rosario Central v Independiente

Sunday, July 2

River Plate v Chacarita Juniors
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Ferro Carril Oeste
Velez Sarsfield v San Lorenzo
Argentinos Juniors v Instituto Cordoba
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Boca Juniors
Lanus v Rosario Central
Independiente v Colon Santa Fe
Belgrano Cordoba v Estudiantes
Union Santa Fe v Talleres Cordoba
Newell's Old Boys v Racing Club

Sunday, July 9

Colon Santa Fe v Lanus
Rosario Central v Argentinos Juniors
Instituto Cordoba v Velez Sarsfield
San Lorenzo v Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy
Ferro Carril Oeste v River Plate
Chacarita Juniors v Newell's Old Boys
Racing Club v Union Santa Fe
Talleres Cordoba v Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata
Boca Juniors v Belgrano Cordoba
Estudiantes v Independiente

Sunday, July 16

Union Santa Fe v Chacarita Juniors
Newell's Old Boys v Ferro Carril Oeste
River Plate v San Lorenzo
Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy v Instituto Cordoba
Talleres Cordoba v Boca Juniors
Velez Sarsfield v Rosario Central
Argentinos Juniors v Colon Santa Fe
Lanus v Estudiantes
Independiente v Belgrano Cordoba
Gimnasia y Esgrima La Plata v Racing Club

REVISED FIXTURES

ENGLAND

Aston Villa v Arsenal
Sun, March 5 (was Sat, March 4)

Bradford v Leeds
Sun, March 12 (was Sat, March 11)

Middlesbrough v Arsenal
Sun, March 12 (was Sat, March 11)

Arsenal v Tottenham
Sun, March 19 (was Sat, March 18)

Tottenham v Middlesbrough
Sun, April 2 (was Sat, April 1)

Derby v Leicester
Mon, April 3 (was Sat, April 1)

Leeds v Arsenal
Sun, April 16 (was Sat, April 15)

Bradford v Derby
Fri, April 21 (was Sat, April 22)

Everton v Liverpool
Fri, April 21 (was Sat, April 22)

HOLLAND

Fri, February 4

Utrecht v MVV

Sat, February 5

Heerenveen v AZ
NEC v De Graafschap
Sparta v Vitesse
Willem II v Twente

Sun, February 6

Ajax v Cambuur
Den Bosch v PSV
Feyenoord v Roda JC
RKC v Fortuna

Wed, February 9

AZ v Sparta
Fortuna v Feyenoord
MVV v Den Bosch
Twente v RKC
Willem II v NEC (from Dec 11)

Thur, February 10

PSV v Ajax
Roda JC v Utrecht

Sat, February 12

Cambuur v Fortuna
NEC v AZ

Sun, February 13

Ajax v Willem II
Den Bosch v Twente
De Graafschap v Utrecht
Heerenveen v PSV
Vitesse v Feyenoord

Tues, February 15

Cambuur v Sparta (from Dec 11)

Fri, February 18

Utrecht v Heerenveen

Sat, February 19

AZ v Cambuur
Den Bosch v Roda JC
Fortuna v Twente
MVV v Sparta
NEC v RKC
PSV v Vitesse

Sun, February 20

Ajax v De Graafschap
Willem II v Feyenoord

Fri, February 25

Roda JC v PSV

Sat, February 26

Feyenoord v MVV (from Feb 27)
Fortuna v Willem II
Twente v Heerenveen

Sun, February 27

Den Bosch v Ajax
RKC v Vitesse
Sparta v NEC (from Feb 25)
Utrecht v AZ

Tues, February 29

Roda JC v Cambuur (from Dec 15)

Fri, March 3

AZ v Willem II
Vitesse v Roda JC

Sat, March 4

Cambuur v MVV

Sun, March 5

De Graafschap v Den Bosch
Heerenveen v Feyenoord
NEC v Utrecht
Sparta v RKC
Twente v Ajax (from Dec 12)

Fri, March 10

AZ v RKC
NEC v Fortuna

Sat, March 11

Feyenoord v Den Bosch (from Mar 12)
MVV v De Graafschap
Roda JC v Sparta (from Mar 12)
Twente v Cambuur (from Mar 12)
Willem II v Heerenveen

Sun, March 12

PSV v Utrecht

Wed, March 15

Fortuna v Ajax (from Feb 2)

Fri, March 17

Cambuur v Feyenoord
NEC v Willem II (from Mar 18)

Sat, March 18

Heerenveen v MVV
PSV v De Graafschap

Sun, March 19

Ajax v Twente
RKC v Roda JC
Sparta v Fortuna
Utrecht v Vitesse

Fri, March 24

AZ v Den Bosch
Fortuna v MVV
Willem II v PSV

Sat, March 25

Cambuur v Roda JC (from Mar 26)
De Graafschap v RKC
Vitesse v Heerenveen (from Mar 26)

Sun, March 26

Ajax v NEC
Feyenoord v Sparta
Twente v Utrecht

Fri, March 31

Heerenveen v NEC
Roda JC v Ajax

Sat, April 1

Den Bosch v Willem II
De Graafschap v Fortuna
MVV v Vitesse
PSV v AZ

Sun, April 2

RKC v Feyenoord
Sparta v Twente
Utrecht v Cambuur

Fri, April 7

AZ v De Graafschap
Fortuna v PSV
NEC v Roda JC

Sat, April 8

Cambuur v Den Bosch
Twente v MVV
Willem II v Vitesse

Sun, April 9

Ajax v Sparta
Feyenoord v Utrecht
RKC v Heerenveen

Fri, April 14

Utrecht v Sparta

Sat, April 15

Heerenveen v Fortuna
MVV v RKC
PSV v Cambuur
Roda JC v Willem II
Vitesse v Twente (from Apr 16)

Sun, April 16

Ajax v AZ
De Graafschap v Feyenoord
Den Bosch v NEC (from Apr 15)

Fri, April 21

AZ v MVV
Fortuna v Utrecht
Twente v PSV

Sat, April 22

Heerenveen v Roda JC
Sparta v Cambuur
Willem II v De Graafschap

Sun, April 23

Feyenoord v Ajax
NEC v Vitesse
RKC v Den Bosch

Fri, April 28

PSV v RKC
Roda JC v Twente

Sun, April 30

Den Bosch v Fortuna
Cambuur v Heerenveen
De Graafschap v Sparta
Feyenoord v AZ
MVV v NEC
Utrecht v Willem II
Vitesse v Ajax (from Apr 28)

Sun, May 7

Ajax v MVV
AZ v Vitesse
Fortuna v Roda JC
Heerenveen v Den Bosch
NEC v Feyenoord
RKC v Utrecht
Sparta v PSV
Twente v De Graafschap
Willem II v Cambuur

Sun, May 14

Den Bosch v Sparta
Cambuur v RKC
De Graafschap v Heerenveen
MVV v Willem II
PSV v NEC
Roda JC v AZ
Feyenoord v Twente
Utrecht v Ajax
Vitesse v Fortuna

SCOTLAND

Celtic v Rangers
Wed, March 8 (was Wed, February 23)

SQUAD LISTS 1999-2000

BELGIUM

ANDERLECHT

GOALKEEPERS

1	Filip DE WILDE	05.07.64
23	Zvonko MILOJEVIC (Yug)	30.08.71

DEFENDERS

16	Bertrand CRASSON	05.10.71
5	Glen DE BOECK	22.08.71
12	Olivier DOLL	09.06.73
32	Nikos KOUNENAKIS (Gre)	03.02.78
	Aleksandar ILIC (Yug)	26.06.69
3	Davy OYEN	17.07.75
6	Lorenzo STAELENS	30.04.64
17	Stephane STASSIN	08.10.76
19	Mike VERSTRAETEN	12.08.67

MIDFIELDERS

28	Walter BASEGGIO	19.08.78
9	Didier DHEEDENE	22.01.72
25	Stijn MEERT	06.04.78
4	Enzo SCIFO	19.02.66
11	Alin STOICA (Rom)	10.12.79
14	Patrick VAN DIEMEN (Hol)	12.06.72
10	Par ZETTERBERG (Swe)	14.10.70

FORWARDS

20	Yannis ANASTASIOU (Gre)	05.03.73
17	Elos Elonga EKAKIA (Con)	05.02.74
7	Bart GOOR	09.04.73
8	Jan KOLLER (Cze)	30.03.73
13	Tomasz RADZINSKI (Can)	14.12.73
21	Tom SOETAERS	21.07.80
22	Oleg YASHCHUK (Ukr)	26.10.77

COACH

Aime ANTHUENIS

BEVEREN

GOALKEEPERS

Philip DECKERS	13.02.80
Tristan PEERSMAN	28.09.79
Kris VAN DE PUTTE	22.12.75

DEFENDERS

Kenny DE VUYST	28.12.77
Stephane DEMETS	26.12.76
Kristof IMSCHOOT	04.12.80
Jimmy SMET	31.10.77
Martin VAN OPHUIZEN (Hol)	03.11.68
Andy VEREERTBRUGGEN	07.02.80
Stijn VLAMINCK	09.03.79

MIDFIELDERS

Ricardo BONETTO (Ita)	20.03.79
Gunter DE MEYER	14.04.68
Bert DHONT	26.08.73
Gideon IMAGBUDU (Nig)	05.08.78
Jozsef NYIKOS (Hun)	09.10.68
Gabor PUGLITS (Hun)	26.12.67
Werry SELS	19.02.74
Lambert SMID (Cze)	09.08.68
Davy THEUNIS	28.01.80
Johan VAN RUMST	30.12.77

FORWARDS

Arben NUHIJI (Mac)	27.02.72
Bartosz TARACHULSKI (Pol)	14.05.75
Remco TORKEN (Hol)	03.01.72
Bart VAN DEN EEDE	03.11.73

COACH

Emilio FERRERA

CHARLEROI

GOALKEEPERS

12	Jean-Francois LECOMTE	17.11.68
1	Marjan MRMIC (Cro)	06.05.65
21	Milan NIKOLIC (Cro)	22.08.81

DEFENDERS

27	Philippe ALBERT	10.08.67
14	Enzo BIONDO	04.11.79
16	Frank DEFAYS	23.02.74
24	Serge EPUTA (Con)	04.02.80
2	Roch GERARD	04.01.72
5	Nicola JERKAN (Cro)	08.12.64
19	Mahamadou KERE (BuF)	02.01.82
3	Tomasz ROMANIUK (Pol)	08.04.74
4	Bertin TOKENE (Cam)	10.05.75

MIDFIELDERS

13	Adem BIRINCI (Tur)	18.08.78
11	Dante BROGNO	02.05.66
8	Zoran CILINSEK (Yug)	20.03.76
15	Fabio DA SILVA (Bra)	25.05.73
10	Dimitri DE CONDE	07.01.75
22	Sergei OMELIANOVITCH (Ukr)	13.08.77
6	Aziz RABBAH (Fra/Mor)	10.09.76
7	Sandro SOUZA (Bra)	15.11.78

FORWARDS

17	Ray DJIM LUCIANO (CAR)	03.08.78
18	Alexandros KAKLAMANOS (Gre)	20.05.74
20	Christian NEGOUAI (Mar)	20.01.78
23	Alassane OUEDRAOGO (BuF)	07.09.80
9	Sergio ROJAS (Arg)	23.11.73

COACH

Raymond MOMMENS

CLUB BRUGGE

GOALKEEPERS

13	Nader Ibrahim EL SAYED (Egy)	31.12.72
23	Philippe VANDE WALLE	22.12.61
1	Dany VERLINDEN	15.08.63

DEFENDERS

5	Vital BORKELMANS	01.06.63
12	Tjorven DE BRUL	22.06.73
21	Olivier DE COCK	09.11.75
2	Eric DEFLANDRE	02.08.73
16	Nzelo LEMBI (Con)	25.08.75
4	Milan LESNJAK (Yug)	09.09.75

MIDFIELDERS

10	Darco ANIC (Yug)	05.03.74
6	Philippe CLEMENT	22.03.74
8	Gaetan ENGLEBERT	11.06.76
	Bratislav RISTIC (Yug)	02.01.80
14	Sven VERMANT	04.04.73

FORWARDS

17	Maxime DHOORE	07.03.78
9	Khalilou FADIGA (Sen)	30.12.74
19	Jochen JANSSEN	22.01.76
11	Sandy MARTENS	23.12.73
	Andres MENDOZA (Per)	02.05.78
25	Dalibor MITROVIC (Yug)	04.11.77
22	Koen SCHOCKAERT	13.02.78
20	Ebrima Ebou SILLAH (Gam)	12.04.80
7	Gert VERHEYEN	20.09.70

COACH

Rene VERHEYEN

EXCELSIOR MOUSCRON

GOALKEEPERS

1	Yves FEYS	16.01.69
23	Krzysztof TYMA (Pol)	03.01.80
21	Franck VANDENDRIESSCHE	07.04.71

DEFENDERS

12	Olivier BESENGEZ	19.09.71
24	Adriano DA CRUZ (Bra)	09.08.74
6	Koen DE VLEESCHAUWER	12.05.71
2	Giovanni SEYNHAEVE	21.07.76
22	Alexandre TEKLAK	16.08.75
17	Donald VAN DURME	23.08.67
15	Gordan VIDOVIC	23.06.68
3	Michal ZEWLAKOW (Pol)	22.04.76

MIDFIELDERS

7	Marco CASTO	02.06.72
4	Steve DUGARDEIN	28.01.74
8	Tonci MARTIC (Cro)	23.11.72
18	Stefaan TANGHE	15.01.72
5	Yves VANDERHAEGHE	30.01.70
14	Marc WUYTS	12.09.72

FORWARDS

11	Mustapha EL IDRISSI (Fra)	16.11.77
9	Axel LAWAREE	09.10.73
16	'Olivier' Polo NZUZI (Con)	16.09.80
20	Gonzague VAN DOOREN	19.08.79
10	Marcin ZEWLAKOW (Pol)	22.04.76

COACH

Hugo BROOS

EENDRACHT AALST

GOALKEEPERS

	Vladan KIJJOVIC (Yug)	23.08.78
	Jan VAN STEENBERGHE	04.07.72

DEFENDERS

	Janos BANFI (Hun)	09.11.69
	Geoffrey CLAEYS	05.10.74
	Steve COOREMAN	29.12.76
	Predrag FILIPOVIC (Yug)	12.01.75
	Ljubodrag MILOSEVIC (Mac)	12.11.69
	Jean-Claude MUKANYA (Con)	01.05.68
	Christophe NEIRINCKX	11.02.81
	Peter VAN DER HEYDEN	16.07.76
	David VAN HOYWEGHEN	20.03.76
	Warry VAN WATTUM (Hol)	22.10.68
	Stijn VERGEYLEN	11.02.80

MIDFIELDERS

	Jose de Oliveira ALEXANDRE (Bra)	26.05.77
	Georges ARTS	10.07.69
	Davy COOREMAN	27.01.71
	Dirk DAELMANS	06.10.68
	Jonny HANSSEN (Nor)	13.12.72
	Kristof KESTENS	12.06.81
	Harold MEYSSEN	24.07.71
	Kris TEMMERMAN	02.02.73

FORWARDS

	Eric BONGUMBA (Con)	03.02.77
	Johan GROMMEN	08.09.77
	Gunter THIEBAUT	12.01.77
	Sammy VAN DEN BOSSCHE	05.05.77

COACH

Barry HULSHOFF

GENK

GOALKEEPERS

1	Istvan BROCKHAUSER (Hun)	03.05.64
25	Gert DOUMEN	24.06.71
	Bert VANDAEL	20.11.81

DEFENDERS

5	Wilfried DELBROEK	25.08.72
3	Daniel KIMONI	18.01.71
6	Domenico OLIVIERI (Ita)	16.01.68
16	Chris VAN GEEM	07.07.71
13	Marc VANGRONSVELD	12.04.73
	Bart VANHEES	18.01.81

MIDFIELDERS

23	Ilir CAUSHLLARI (Alb)	05.10.74
17	Bjarni GUDJONSSON (Ice)	26.02.79
15	Johannes GUDJONSSON (Ice)	25.05.80
10	Thordur GUDJONSSON (Ice)	14.10.73
8	Besnik HASI (Cro)	25.12.71
12	Marc HENDRIKX	02.07.74
4	Jesper JANSSON (Swe)	08.01.71
21	Ngoy N'SUMBU (Con)	30.12.72
7	Michael Okoth ORIGI (Ken)	16.11.67
2	Juha REINI (Fin)	19.03.75
19	Stefan TEELEN	10.04.79

FORWARDS

14	Zoran BAN (Cro)	27.05.73
22	Rogerio de Oliveira BENJAMIN (Bra)	28.06.78
18	Ferenc HORVATH (Hun)	06.05.73
9	Souleymane OULARE (Gui)	16.10.72
20	Fabio PEREIRA-RUFINO (Bra)	21.04.78

COACH

Jos HEYLIGEN

GENT

GOALKEEPERS

23	Frederic HERPOEL	16.08.74
1	Zoran SAVIC (Yug)	04.01.74
	Bjorn VAN AVERMAET	18.09.78

DEFENDERS

21	Fabio BURGIO	21.07.81
17	Cedric CARREZ (Fra)	07.02.74
19	Anders CHRISTENSEN (Den)	26.07.77
3	Ivica DRAGUTINOVIC (Yug)	13.11.75
22	Eric JOLY (Fra)	06.10.72
	Morten PEDERSEN (Nor)	12.04.72
5	Edin RAMCIC (Bos)	01.08.70
15	Emil STERBAL (Slv)	15.06.70
16	Tamas SZEKERES (Hun)	18.09.72
2	Tom VANDERVEE	19.09.70
4	Tomas VASOV (Yug)	31.01.72

MIDFIELDERS

8	Mohammed BARKA	10.05.71
7	Frank DAUWEN	03.11.67
12	Ronald FOGUENNE	10.08.70
9	Saso GAJSER (Slv)	11.02.74
18	Tarik KHARIF (Fra)	16.09.76
13	Gunther SCHEPENS	04.05.73

FORWARDS

10	Ole-Martin ARST (Nor)	19.07.74
	Tore Andre DAHLUM (Nor)	21.12.68
6	Frederic DUPRE	12.05.79
20	Anders NIELSEN (Den)	06.12.70

COACH

Trond SOLLIED

GERMINAL BEERSCHOT ANTWERP

GOALKEEPERS

	Peter MAES	01.06.64
	Jan MOONS	26.09.70
	Bram VERBIST	05.05.83

DEFENDERS

	Tony HERREMAN	23.01.69
	Ervin KOVACS (Hun)	24.01.67
	Vinko MARINOVIC (Yug)	03.03.71
	Aleksandar MUTAVDZIC (Yug)	03.01.77
	Justice Djeumen SANDJON (Cam)	03.08.72
	Rudi SMIDTS	12.08.63
	Djordje SVETLICIC (Yug)	05.01.74
	Alain VAN MIEGHEM	02.05.82

MIDFIELDERS

	Joel BARTHOLOMEEUSSEN	02.03.66
	Geert BRUSSELERS (Hol)	06.01.70
	Marc DEGRYSE	04.09.65
	Philip HAAGDOREN	25.06.70
	Gunther HOFMANS	03.01.67
	Emmanuel KARAGIANNIS	22.11.66
	Stephan VAN DER HEYDEN	03.07.69

FORWARDS

	Andrei DEMKINE (Rus)	21.02.76
	Frederic HANSSENS	29.05.82
	Kurt MORHAYE	29.03.77
	Francis SEVEREYNS	08.01.68
	Wesley SONCK	09.08.78

COACH

Franky VAN DER ELST

HARELBEKE

GOALKEEPERS

17	Kemoko CAMARA (Gui)	05.04.75
1	Kurt VANDOORNE	06.09.75

DEFENDERS

18	Nordine HAMEG (Alg)	21.08.64
5	Blessing KAKU (Nig)	05.03.78
2	Lukasz KUBIK (Pol)	02.04.78
12	Daniel MAES	07.07.66
3	Kenny VERHOENE	15.04.73
23	Jeffrey VERHOEVEN	12.07.74

MIDFIELDERS

7	Andrei DIATEL (Rus)	08.01.80
6	Rene KLOMP (Hol)	16.08.74
11	Arkadiusz KUBIK (Pol)	31.05.72
8	Martinus LAAMERS (Hol)	02.08.67

FORWARDS

4	Joris DE TOLLENAERE	17.08.70
10	Dimitri MITCHKOV (Rus)	22.02.80
9	David PAAS	24.02.71
21	Steven WOSTIJN	28.12.75
14	Rimantas ZVINGILAS (Lit)	03.09.73

COACH

Henk HOUWAART

LIERSE

GOALKEEPERS

1	Patrick DEMAN	31.07.68
22	Cliff MARDULIER	22.09.82
12	Patrick NIJS	25.01.69

DEFENDERS

23	Tim DE KEYSER	14.09.78
3	Carl HOEFKENS	06.10.78
2	Steve LAEREMANS	26.03.72
15	Jerry POORTERS	09.10.78
13	Gela SHEKILADZE (Geo)	14.09.70
4	Eric VAN MEIR	28.02.68

MIDFIELDERS

20	Coen BURG (Hol)	16.01.68
5	Filip DAEMS	31.10.78
6	Frank LEEN	04.10.70
7	Karel SNOECKX	29.10.73
8	Hans SOMERS	09.03.78
14	Luc STRUYVEN	30.08.81
11	Robby VAN DE WEYER	30.06.75
16	David VANDECAUTER	29.08.81
10	Thomas ZDEBEL (Ger)	25.05.73

FORWARDS

9	Jurgen CAVENS	19.08.78
24	Pieter HUISTRA (Hol)	18.01.67
17	Stein HUYSEGEMS	16.06.82
18	Dirk HUYSMANS	03.09.73
21	Gert PEELMAN	26.08.75
19	Joe SPITERI (Aus)	06.05.73

COACH

Walter MEEUWS

LOKEREN

GOALKEEPERS

	Mladen DABANOVIC (Slv)	13.09.71
	Jurgen SIERENS	10.04.76
	Daniel ZITKA (Cze)	20.06.75

DEFENDERS

	Sam-Dominique ABOUO (IvC)	26.12.73
	Steven DE GEEST	16.06.81
	Karel DE SMET	21.08.80
	Suad KATANA (Bos)	06.04.69
	Ognjen MAJDOV (Cro)	25.08.74
	Camille MUZINGA (Con)	12.06.80
	Stefaan STAELENS	25.02.72
	Stefan VAN DENDER	04.06.77
	Hein VANHAEZEBROUCK	16.02.64
	Patrice ZERE (IvC)	20.12.70

MIDFIELDERS

	Davy DE BEULE	07.11.81
	Sinisa DOBRASINOVIC (Yug)	17.02.77
	Christiaan JANSSENS	12.06.69
	Papy KIMOTO (Con)	22.07.76
	Marcel MBAYO (Con)	23.04.78
	Zeljko MITRAKOVIC (Slv)	30.12.72
	Martin PENICKA (Cze)	10.12.69
	Ronny VAN GENEUGDEN	17.08.68
	Arnar VIDARSSON (Ice)	15.03.78
	Roman VONASEK (Cze)	08.07.68

FORWARDS

	Jean-Paul Gauthier BOEKA-LISASI (Con)	06.06.74
	Charles DAGO (IvC)	01.11.75
	Novica NIKCEVIC (Slv)	07.10.72
	Souleymane YOULA (Gui)	29.11.81

COACH

Georges LEEKENS

LOMMEL

GOALKEEPERS

20	Gert DAVIDTS	30.05.72
1	Jacky MATHIJSSEN	20.07.63

DEFENDERS

2	Daniel NASSEN	24.11.66
7	Michel NOBEN	04.05.70
6	Daniel SCAVONE	03.09.72
12	Dirk SCHOOFS	07.11.79
5	Didier SEGERS	21.02.65
3	Timmy SIMONS	11.12.76
17	Wim VAN DIEST	02.03.77
4	Eric VAN KESSEL (Hol)	28.02.66
15	Kris VINCKEN	04.11.77

MIDFIELDERS

19	Mark FORD (Eng)	10.10.75
22	Stijn HAELDERMANS	22.04.75
10	Kresimir MARUSIC (Cro)	23.11.69
14	Wim MENNES	25.01.77
8	'NIVALDO' Vieira Lima (Bra)	08.11.77
13	Karim ZOUAOUI (Fra)	12.11.71

FORWARDS

11	Dieter DEKELVER	17.08.79
16	Sylvio GARCIA	21.06.80
18	Louis GOMIS (Sen)	03.12.74
21	Kim GRANT (Gha)	25.07.72
23	Tom VANRUYSSEVELDT	05.08.82
9	Mirek WALIGORA (Pol)	04.02.70

COACH

Harn VAN VELDHOVEN

MECHELEN

GOALKEEPERS

16	Johnny LEBEGGE	22.05.79
1	Ivan WILLOCKX	12.11.75

DEFENDERS

4	Johan BAL	07.04.75
20	Johan DARCON	09.09.80
5	Benjamin DEBUSSCHERE	07.12.68
3	Drissa DIALLO (Fra/Gui)	04.01.73
2	Fritz EMERAN (Fra)	28.03.76
18	Geoffrey PEYTIER	09.08.77

MIDFIELDERS

15	Ngom Ousmane CAMARA (Gui)	26.05.75
7	Daniel CAMUS	21.10.70
13	Sammy GREVEN	08.07.73
19	Tom PEETERS	25.09.78
6	Sven VANDENBROECK	22.09.79

FORWARDS

21	Chris BRUYNINCKX	02.04.78
	Thomas CHATELLE	31.03.81
11	Joao ELIAS (Ang)	12.12.73
12	Serguei KOULITCHENKO (Rus)	04.08.78
14	Garret KUSCH (Can)	26.09.73
17	Steven RIBUS	22.07.78
9	Joris VAN HOUT	10.01.77
22	Matthias VAN STEENBERGHE	08.10.79

COACH

Gunter JACOB

STANDARD LIEGE

GOALKEEPERS

18	Dimitri HABRAN	22.08.75
1	Vedran RUNJE (Cro)	10.02.76
25	Filip SUSNJARA (Cro)	07.04.76

DEFENDERS

15	Rabiu AFOLABI (Nig)	18.04.80
4	George BLAY (Gha)	07.08.80
	David BROCKEN	18.02.71
	Liviu CIOBOTARIU (Rom)	07.01.71
	DIMAS Manuel Marques Teixeira (Por)	16.02.69
2	Didier ERNST	15.09.71
5	Ariel GRANA (Arg)	19.01.76
12	Gauthier REMACLE	26.05.77
	Tibor SELYMES (Rom)	14.05.70
16	Bernd THIJS	28.06.78
20	Laurent WUILLOT	11.07.75

MIDFIELDERS

26	Theophilus AMUZU (Gha)	02.11.80
6	Roberto BISCONTI	21.07.73
27	Laurent FASOTTE	31.12.77
14	Emmanuel GODFROID	16.08.72
7	Guy HELLERS (Lux)	10.10.64
30	Sebastien PIRON	08.02.79
3	Daniel VAN BUYTEN	07.02.78
32	Joseph YOBO (Nig)	06.09.80

FORWARDS

23	Marc CHAUVEHEID	26.01.78
	Pascal DIAS (Fra)	10.02.76
	Michael GOOSSENS	30.11.73
28	Lasha JAKOBIA (Geo)	20.08.80
17	Maboula 'Ali' LUKUNKU (Fra)	14.04.76
29	Guerry MARECHAL	24.11.79
19	Ivica MORNAR (Cro)	12.01.74
8	Frederic PIERRE	23.02.74
31	Onder TURACI	14.07.81

COACH

Jean THISSEN

ST TRUIDEN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Dusan BELIC (Yug)	29.03.71
22	Davy SCHOLLEN	28.02.78
20	Robert VOLK (Slv)	30.08.65

DEFENDERS

18	Samuel AERTS	17.11.77
15	Robrecht DECKERS	28.03.81
24	Robbie DELLO	10.08.78
12	Gunther GRAMMET	27.04.78
3	Nicky HAYEN	16.08.80
7	Philippe LENGLOIS	16.08.72
6	Steven NIJS	24.12.75
5	Dirk VAN OEKELEN	31.03.71
4	Peter VOETS	17.09.68
2	Wouter VRANCKEN	03.02.79

MIDFIELDERS

26	Kris BUVENS	30.12.79
17	Peter DELORGE	14.04.80
14	Eddy DIERICKX	14.10.70
19	Sascha HOLANS	20.11.78
11	Magelhaes da Silva ISAIAS (Blg/Bra)	29.11.73
16	Patrick TEPPERS	30.07.64
8	Gunter VERJANS	06.10.73

FORWARDS

9	Filip FIERS	26.05.69
10	Kurt MERTENS	26.04.71
13	Mladen RUDONJA (Slv)	26.07.71
23	Bram VANGEEL	08.10.80

COACH

Willy REYNDERS

VERBROEDERING GEEL

GOALKEEPERS

26	Mathieu MERTENS	26.06.65
27	Steven OLIESLAGERS	28.08.81
1	Ronny SCHUERMANS	16.09.71

DEFENDERS

5	Emmanuel ASARE (Gha)	31.12.73
2	Jo GEERINCKX	12.01.79
6	Marc JANSSEN	08.02.74
3	Dave SMITS (Hol)	07.08.69
16	Marc SYLVERANS	17.06.72
19	Georgica VAMESU (Rom)	03.11.68

MIDFIELDERS

15	Davy ALENTIJNS	25.02.75
	Gudmunder BENEDIKTSSON (Ice)	
8	Chris BOLLAERTS	28.02.70
4	Steven JANSSENS	18.02.78
18	Miklos LENDVAI (Hun)	07.04.75
	Tony MOLS	08.01.69
17	Bjorn SMITS	28.07.75
14	Bruno VERSAVEL	27.08.67

FORWARDS

9	Nico CURTO	24.01.74
10	Bjorn DAELEMANS	11.12.77
11	Jef DELEN	29.06.76
7	Peter MEEUSEN	11.09.73
21	Ljubisa NIKOLIC (Yug)	01.11.72
12	Dalibor NOVCIC (Yug)	13.07.71
	ZEFILHO de Sousa	

COACH

Dimitri MBUYU

WESTERLO

GOALKEEPERS

13	Bart DEELKENS	25.04.78
1	Franky FRANS	27.02.66

DEFENDERS

15	Sadio BA	24.01.73
8	Bjorn DE CONINCK	20.07.77
19	Antonio DOS SANTOS (Bra)	26.04.78
6	Sidney LAMMENS	14.06.77
16	Frank MACHIELS	16.06.70
3	Marc SCHAESSENS	14.09.68
5	Ives SERNEELS	16.10.72
12	Dirk THOELEN	15.05.68
4	Mario VERHEYEN	17.12.73

MIDFIELDERS

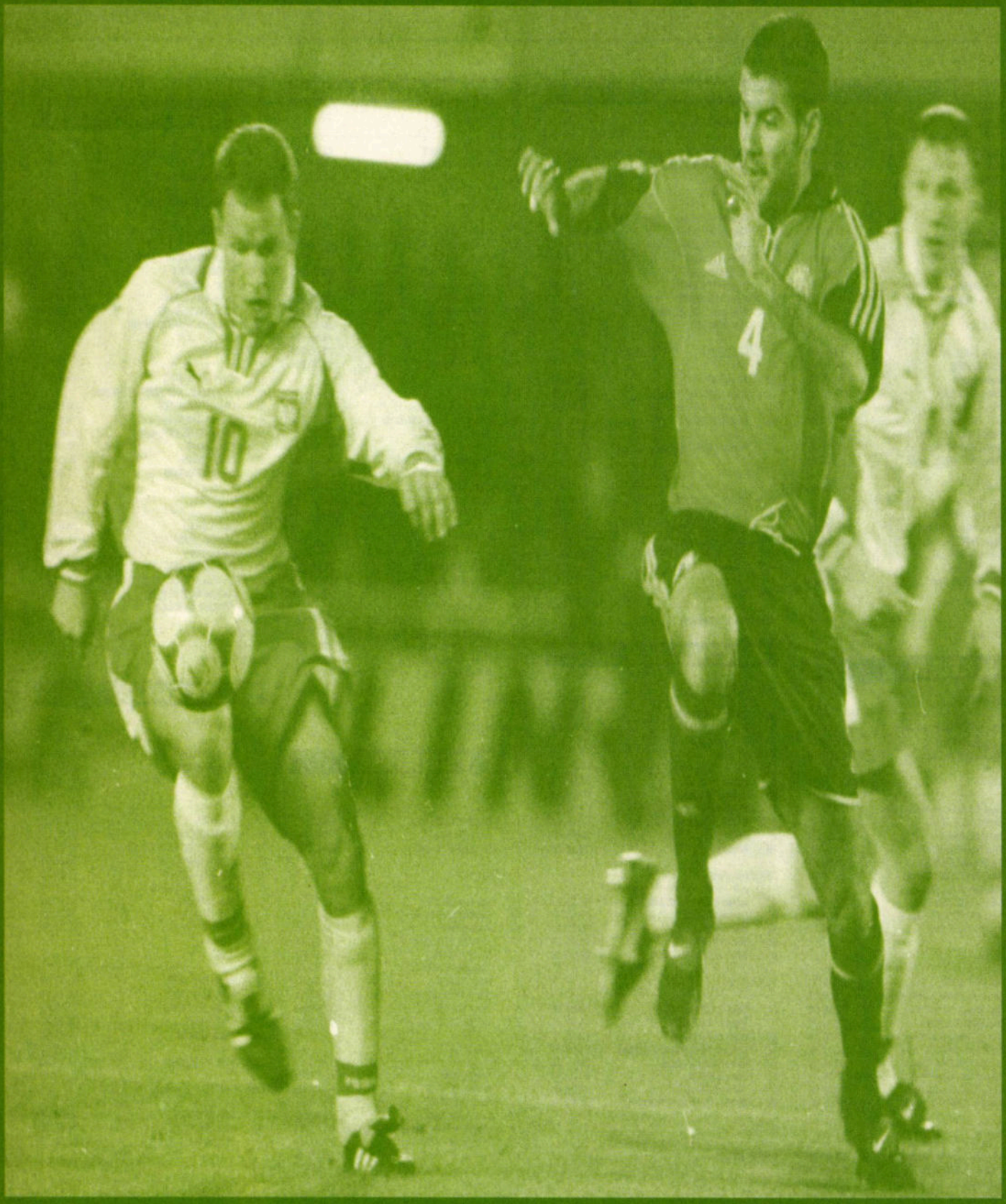
23	David BECKERS	03.01.80
7	Rudy JANSSENS	05.08.63
10	Cvijan MILOSEVIC	27.10.63
2	Krist PORTE	06.09.68
14	Benoit THANS	20.08.64
22	Ken THIJS	01.02.80
20	Bart WILLEMSEN	13.10.80

FORWARDS

17	Toni BROGNO	19.07.73
18	Dejan MITROVIC (Yug)	10.02.73
9	Vedran PELIC (Bos)	01.10.75

COACH

Jan CEULEMANS



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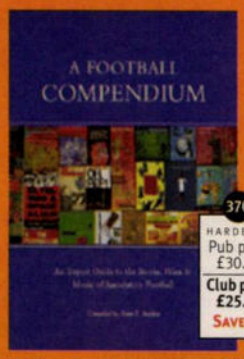

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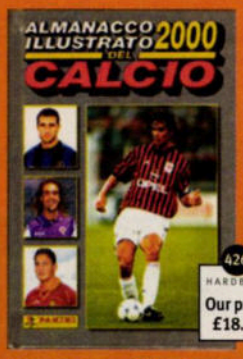

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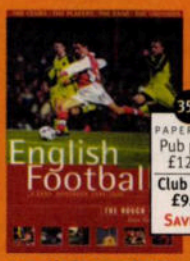

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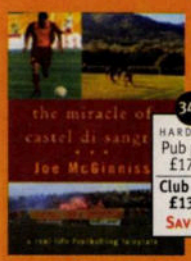

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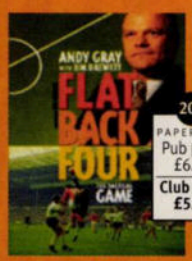

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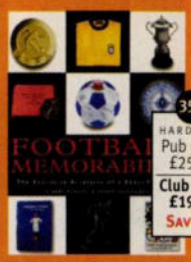

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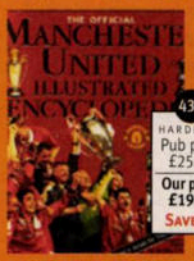

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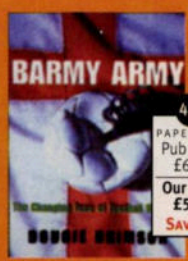

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W Soccer MAR 00

Zidane inspires Juventus

Paddy Agnew on the halfway leaders of Serie A

Driving force...Juve's Zinedine Zidane

THE TOWN of Reggio Calabria on the very southernmost tip of the Italian peninsula is not a place you normally associate with top class soccer. Even less, do you expect Reggio to be the site of some significant Serie A developments.

However, events halfway through the second half of Reggina's home Serie A game against Juventus in January served as a dire warning to all the 'Old Lady's' title rivals.

It was that man Zinedine Zidane who caused the fuss. Picking up a ball close to the Reggina penalty area, the Frenchman shimmied one way, danced another and with the ball seemingly magnetically attached to his foot all the while, left three defenders in his wake before hitting home an awesome left-footed goal.

If we did not know it before, we do now. Zidane is back in business, and if he is, so too are Juventus. At the moment, they are simply the strongest side in the land.

Two weeks before the Reggina game, won 2-0, Zidane and Juve had emphatically signalled their well-being with an aggressive, dominant performance in a 1-1 away draw with Parma. The result distinctly flattered the home side, who equalised in the 92nd minute through Hernan Crespo.

Reggina are, of course, Serie A newcomers but they held Juve to an honourable 1-1 draw at the Stadio Delle Alpi last August in their first ever top flight game.

When Juventus flew down to Calabria for the return leg in January, they were welcomed at their hotel by more than 3,000 fans, delirious at the thought of seeing Del Piero, Zidane et al play their first ever Serie A game at Reggio's Stadio Oreste Granillo.

The enthusiasm of the Reggina fans, allied to all the adrenalin generated by a 'David' having a first taste of soccer's big time, has meant that 'Goliaths' such as Fiorentina, Parma and Lazio have all dropped points in Reggio.

However, though Reggina may not be an easy away fixture, no one told Juventus, who won easily. This prompted Reggina coach Franco Colomba to comment: "By comparison with the game last August, we've improved a lot, but the problem is they've improved even more.

"I'd have been happy to play against a Juventus side that was a little less stratospheric. They used our own tactics against us, they were the aggressive ones, the way we usually are at our home venue."

Even an Italian Cup quarter-final elimination at the hands of Lazio did little to damage the current Juventus reputation. In a tie that might have gone either way, Juventus lost out on away goals, but could take consolation from the fact that the return leg in Rome signalled Alessandro Del Piero's first goal from open play this season.

Until that Cup tie, Del Piero had been under a cloud, having scored only from the penalty spot (four times in Serie A) and having looked generally a long way from his pre-injury best.

Despite criticism from Juve fans calling for team coach Carlo Ancelotti to drop Del Piero in favour of useful Yugoslav striker Darko Kovacevic, he has stuck with Del Piero, patiently waiting for him to refind the sort of form shown prior to that November 1998 knee injury.

Ancelotti's patience may now be about to pay off. With Zidane in full flight, with Del Piero on the way back and with the tightest defence in Serie A (by the halfway stage, Juventus had conceded half as many goals as their closest rivals, Lazio), the Old Lady has served notice on everyone.

A 26th Italian title, not to mention a continued good run in the UEFA Cup, are not to be ruled out.

That aforementioned Lazio victory over Juventus in the Italian Cup, however, may well prove to have been another significant result.

Having closed 1999 as League leaders, Lazio started the New Year badly with only one win in their first four Serie A games. An angry club president, Sergio Cragnotti, duly issued Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson with an ultimatum of the 'Win-Something-Or-You'll-Be-Sacked-Next-June' variety.

Lazio's problems, this season and last, have looked more mental than physical, more to do with the exorbitant pressures created by the environment at the club than with any deficiencies in the squad.

If Eriksson can keep a steady hand on the tiller – and recent training ground scraps such as that involving Portuguese defender Fernando Couto and Argentine Diego Simeone indicate just how difficult that can be – then Lazio can still have a big say in both the title contest and the Champions League.

One obvious forthcoming problem for Lazio, however, concerns their attack. Apart from the fact that any side would miss Christian Vieri, their hero of last season now with Inter, there are worries about all the other strikers. Veteran Roberto Mancini is still brilliant but he is also 35 and headed for end-of-season retirement.

Alen Boksic is world class but injury prone, Simone Inzaghi is a player of huge potential but still relatively inexperienced, while Chilean Marcelo Salas is likely to go missing for a variety of springtime friendlies and World Cup qualifiers with Chile.

All of which explains why media speculation in late January claimed that Lazio were interested in the immediate purchase or loan of either Argentine Claudio Lopez or even wayward Brazilian Edmundo. All of which also explains why Lazio opted to buy Fabrizio Ravanelli as cover, from Marseille in late December.

At the halfway point of the season, Lazio are the only Italian club still capable of lifting the treble of Serie A title, European and Italian Cups. The quarter-finals of the domestic knockout saw Roma, Fiorentina, Milan and, of course, Juventus all bite the dust, while Parma had already been eliminated in the pre-Christmas third round.

For Parma, Roma and Juve, all still contenders in the title battle and the UEFA Cup, elimination from the Italian Cup could prove a blessing.

For Fiorentina and Milan, however, it was a painful setback.

By the time, the Florentines came to play their quarter-final tie against Venezia, they had sunk to 12th in Serie A, 17 points off the pace and obviously out of the title contest. So disappointed were the club's passionate 'Curva Fiesole' supporters that they opted to go on 'strike' and not attend the game.

Defeat in a dramatic Cup tie, in which Fiorentina striker Enrico Chiesa missed what would have been a tie-winning penalty late in injury time, did not do much for those Fiorentina fans who had rejected the 'strike' calls and gone to the match.

They vented their frustration on club president Vittorio Cecchi Gori, throwing stones at his car. This prompted him to comment: "I'm not God, I don't know how to perform miracles, but I'm not giving up. After all, we're still in the Champions League and we can improve our position in Serie A."

Fiorentina are indeed still in the Champions League and that is more than Milan can say. Already eliminated from the Champions League, and the UEFA Cup, Milan's Italian Cup elimination by cross-town rivals Inter merely rubbed salt into their wounds.

The reigning Italian champions are in difficulty and even if they are still close to the top of the table, this is already looking like a season in which they risk ending up empty-handed.

Recent media speculation envisages coach Alberto Zaccheroni being sacked at the end of the season to be replaced by ex-Foggia, Lazio and Roma coach, Zdenek Zeman, recently returned to Italy after three largely unsuccessful months with Fenerbahce in Turkey.

Curious, too, that at just this moment of difficulty, Milan should opt to loan to Chelsea one of their most consistently brilliant players of the past five seasons, namely 33-year-old George Weah. The Liberian striker revealed that the move was made rather against his will. "I'm not leaving because I decided to go," he said. "It's hard to explain but I want the fans to know that it wasn't my idea to leave Milan.

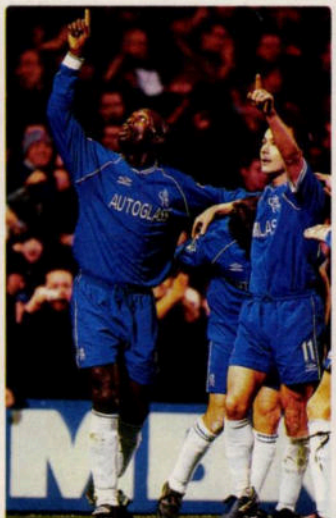
"In all of this business, the one thing that displeased me is that Milan would not let me join the club I wanted to join. I had been in contact with Roma, their coach [Fabio] Capello knows me well and he wanted me.

"But Milan stopped the move. You are not going to play for any other Italian club, they said. But why, I ask you? If I was such a danger to them, why let me go in the first place, why not keep me here?"

Weah has had difficulty commanding a regular first-team place this season, with competition coming from the likes of Ukrainian Andrii Shevchenko, German Oliver Bierhoff, Brazilian Leonardo and the recently acquired Spaniard Jose Mari. It was the purchase of Jose Mari that appeared to seal Weah's fate, with the Liberian refusing to accept that he should spend even more time on the bench.

While Weah was leaving Italy, Roberto Baggio arose again, scoring Inter's equaliser in the 1-1 Cup return leg draw that eliminated Milan.

Four days earlier, Baggio, a half-time substitute, had set up Inter's equaliser in a League game against Verona and then scored the winner with a deft touch.


Loaned out...Weah at Chelsea

Writing in this column last month, we suggested that Roberto Baggio might not yet "be down and out". Despite his palpable difficulties with Inter coach Marcello Lippi, he seems destined to write a few more intriguing pages in what has always been a controversial career.

Class, as Italians say, is not water.

Pro-file Gianluca Zambrotta

Juve's young Mr Versatile is making his mark

RISING Italian midfielder Gianluca Zambrotta is thriving on the white-hot competition for places at Juventus since his £6.6million move from Bari last summer.

At the start of the season Zambrotta found himself in a four-cornered battle with Gianluca Pessotto, Alessandro Birindelli and fellow newcomer Jonathan Bachini (ex-Udinese) for the right wing-back role.

Although Juventus coach Carlo Ancelotti initially opted to alternate between Pessotto and Zambrotta, the latter's displays have been so outstanding of late that he now looks to have the position to himself.

There have been many factors behind Juve's strong showing in Serie A this term, including the dynamism of Edgar Davids, Edwin Van der Sar's unflappable performances in goal, the rebirth of Zinedine Zidane, and Pippo Inzaghi's opportunism up front. But the excellent form of 22-year-old Zambrotta, with his purposeful attacking play and accurate crossing, tactical awareness and industry, has been another key component.

Indeed, if Zambrotta, who won his first senior cap 12 months ago in a friendly against Norway, keeps up his good work, he will be a must for the Italian squad at Euro 2000.

"At Juventus I've learnt such a lot in a very short space of time and I feel I have improved my game in many ways, but especially defensively," he says. "Now I know I can be just as effective covering and working back as going forward.

"The fact that I didn't start the season with a guaranteed place was not a reason to become annoyed. Every week I have to earn the right to play. Pessotto, Birindelli and Bachini are fine players and it's only right that the coach picks whichever one of us is in the best form. Those are the rules of the game.

"It's nice to be noticed. But the great strength of this team is unity and that's what has made us so consistent this season."

Zambrotta is renowned for his versatility. At his first club, Como, then in the top flight with Bari (1997-1999) and for Italy's Under-21s, it made no difference in which position he played. The net result was usually a good performance.

"Zambrotta has the ability to play almost anywhere," says Juve coach Ancelotti. "But I think the right side of midfield is his best position, and there he has been a breath of fresh air for the club."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Juventus
Country Italy
Born February 19, 1977, in Como
Previous clubs Como, Bari
International debut February 1999, v Norway
International caps 1 (0 goals)

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Closing in...Poland's Czerwiec races Guardiola to the ball

Doubts over Camacho

National coach threatens to quit in club-versus-country row

SPANISH federation officials are wondering whether to compile a shortlist of possible new national coaches to take on the Euro 2000 challenge after an extraordinary tantrum by Jose Antonio Camacho before the 3-0 win over Poland in Cartagena. The match was billed as a friendly but the mood was anything but that in the Spanish camp after Camacho phoned in his resignation after one of those old club v country rows.

Real Madrid's adventure at the World Club Championship was the catalyst. As a result of the competition in Brazil, they had been allowed to reschedule their League matches, and one of them, against Betis, was set down for the Wednesday on which Spain were due to play Poland. Real and the League justified the clash on the basis that the club had to get their catch-up matches in before the restart of the Champions League, while avoiding midweek nights set aside for the Spanish Cup.

Real appealed to the federation to ask Camacho not to select any of their players for the Poland match. The FEF dithered in response, which infuriated Camacho, who hates the politics-ridden minefield in which he has to work.

He said: "If I do not feel comfortable in a job then I quit, and I am not happy now. I can take the pressure of losing 3-0 but the trouble it causes selecting a squad of players is just not worth the effort. This is not the way to prepare for the European Championship."

In the end Camacho was persuaded to stay on but there will not be a second chance if he explodes again. Spain believe they have a serious chance of winning Euro 2000 and FEF president Angel Villar will not pander much longer to an over-sensitive coach.

At least Camacho had the consolation of a 3-0 win over Poland. Raul opened the scoring after 15 minutes, with Bilbao's Ismael Urzaiz getting the other two goals after half-time. Celta right-back Velasco, Santander striker Salva, Rayo midfielder Luis Cembranos and Zaragoza keeper Juanmi all made their senior debuts, while Luis Enrique joined the elite dozen players who have won 50 or more caps for Spain. That achievement will not, however, help him impress Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal, who appears to prefer Jari Litmanen in the in-between role Luis Enrique enjoys the most. That could be bad news for Luis Enrique's Euro 2000 ambitions.

Camacho quit 21 days into his reign at Real 18 months ago in a row over his right to pick his own assistants. Now the club are keen to take him back, and given Camacho's trigger-happy approach to the Spain job right now, it could be sooner rather than later. Happily for everyone, considering the controversy raised, Real Madrid continued their post-Brazil catch-up programme by defeating Betis 2-1.

The title race remains a messy affair. Rayo Vallecano and then Celta have both raced up to top spot, then faded; now it's La Coruna's turn to look uneasy in the lead – especially with Barcelona putting on the pressure. Sevilla appear doomed to relegation once more since they are six points adrift of Sociedad.

Keir Radnedge

Pro-file Savo Milosevic

Goal glut puts Yugoslav back on track

SAVO MILOSEVIC is once again a man in demand. After his acrimonious departure from Aston Villa almost two years ago, the Yugoslav striker has rediscovered his scoring touch. He hit 17 goals in his first season in Spain with Real Zaragoza, and he had already beaten that total by the halfway point this term.

Milosevic's goals have been a major factor in Zaragoza's surprise title challenge. It's all a far cry from Villa, where he left in disgrace after allegedly spitting at disgruntled fans.

Milosevic had arrived in Birmingham in the summer of 1995 as a raw, fresh 21-year-old from Partizan Belgrade. But the move quickly turned sour. "After six months, I wanted to leave," he says. "I felt uncomfortable, even though I was a regular in the first team, but the chairman did not want to sell me. It was not really Aston Villa that I wanted to escape from, but English football, which did not suit me."

When the offer came from Zaragoza, he jumped at it. "I wanted to join an ambitious club, but not a huge club. A team in which I would be a first-team regular. I immediately played in my favourite position, as the target man. At Aston Villa I was playing as a second striker."

Despite losing the likes of Kily Gonzalez and Gustavo Lopez, to Valencia and Celta Vigo respectively, Zaragoza have mounted a credible League challenge this term. "We have less individual quality this year," says Milosevic, "but in terms of the team, we have progressed a great deal. We make up a solid unit, and the self-discipline is always there, particularly in defence."

His 18 goals so far this season have led to speculation of a move to a bigger club, either in Spain or, more likely, Italy. Milosevic says: "I am still ambitious, and if a big club did make an offer, I would inform the officials of Zaragoza about it straight away. I am still under contract, and therefore unable to make that decision on my own."

However, Milosevic, who is likely to play a major role for Yugoslavia at Euro 2000, has also hinted that he could stay at Zaragoza – if they qualify for Europe next season.

"If we play in the Champions League it could be that I stay put. Money is important but it isn't everything. I'm looking for a team to triumph and if that's Zaragoza then I'll stay.

"To win the League with Zaragoza would be a dream. It's not impossible, but it would be a dream."

Gavin Hamilton

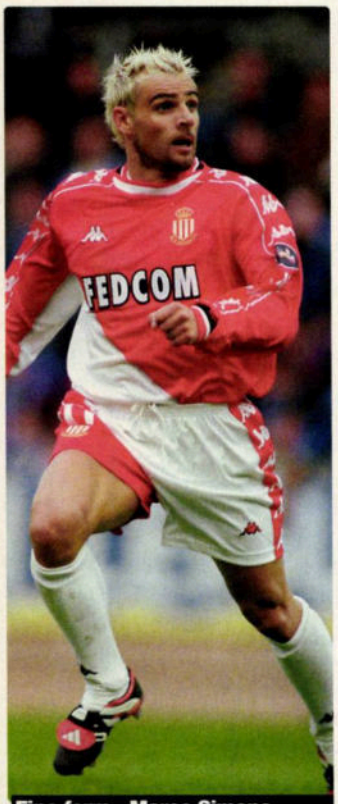
Fact file

Club Real Zaragoza (Spa)
Country Yugoslavia
Born September 2, 1973, in Bijelijna, Bosnia
Previous clubs Partizan Belgrade, Aston Villa (Eng)
International debut December 1994, v Brazil
International caps 37 (19 goals)
Honours Yugoslavian League 1993, 1994; English League Cup 1996

FRANCE

Benefits all round as Monaco show the way

Simone is the star for the table-toppers, but Gallardo, Trezeguet and Lamouchi deserve credit, too



Fine form...Marco Simone

DAVID TREZEGUET, much admired by his new attacking team-mate Marco Simone, recently knocked in two out of three goals for Monaco at home to Rennes, when they took a still firmer grip on the championship. But Simone has been the main man in his team's astonishing run of success.

This though the team also contains that dazzling little Argentinian attacker, Marcelo Gallardo, and the elegant midfielder Sabri Lamouchi, who is making his mark again after a dazzling early spell was followed by relative obscurity.

Lamouchi quite openly admits that when it was known that Simone, once such a star but so often a substitute with Milan, was arriving from Paris Saint-Germain, he had his doubts. Simone, he said, had a "terrible" reputation. Simone insists that this was all down to the machinations of "a group of incompetents".

Lamouchi's impression was that Simone, who had in fact had such a good first season at PSG, was at the origin of everything good and everything bad at that club.

"You asked yourself what the man was really like, because we all knew about the player. He was beyond discussion! We discovered a perfectly simple chap, who knew how to adapt without making waves, helped by a sound group of great quality.

"Before he came to Monaco, we had put him down as a star. He showed quite the contrary, a great professional endowed with great humanity."

Simone admits he had difficulties in his second season at PSG but blames them, rationally enough, on the chaos at the club, reflecting the power struggles within their owners, the TV company Canal Plus. He says he has always been just the same.

At the break of the season he had scored 13 goals and set up 10 others, but he insists that he is primarily a passer of the ball who had begun his career as an attacking midfielder.

He gets on well with the young Monaco manager, Claude Puel, who stepped in when Jean Tigana – much admired by Simone – left the club. Asked whether there are similarities between Puel and his old manager at Milan, Fabio Capello, Simone is amused and says that yes he did once have a disagreement when he was substituted by Puel, and that Puel resembled Italian coaches in his denotation to rigour and discipline. Yet that he is capable of letting go at times, whereas Capello never unclenched his teeth, "and ended up being hated by everyone!"

There seems no doubt that the arrival of Gallardo and Simone has benefited Trezeguet, who seems likely to be tried again as the umpteenth solution to France's striking problems. The more so as, just as Nicolas Anelka was running into form and at long last scoring goals for Real Madrid, he was badly injured and could be out for months.

Of Trezeguet, Simone enthusiastically says: "What one forgets a little too often is that he is only 22. The media are sometimes too critical of him. He must be left time to develop, he still has an enormous scope for progress. I'm sure of one thing: David will go very far, as he already has everything: physique, heading, technique."

Talking of centre-forwards, that rolling stone Christophe Dugarry, who rolled unhappily to Milan and

GERMANY

On, off, on...

Matthaus move to USA is lined up at last

AT LAST an end is in sight to the Lothar Matthaus saga. Germany's most-capped player will, after all, be flying stateside to join New York/New Jersey MetroStars on or around March 10, having made his competitive farewell for Bayern Munich in the Champions League tie against Real Madrid.

But it took some persuasive talking from the new men at MetroStars, general manager Nick Sakiewicz and coach Octavio Zambrano, to convince Matthaus that the decision he made last autumn, when he agreed to go to the USA, was the right one.

After urgent talks at La Manga in Spain, where Bayern had flown for mid-season training, Matthaus said: "All the misunderstandings have been clarified. I shall be going to New York after all."

German football will be sorry to see him go. Remarkably, Matthaus – 39 in March – remains as ambitious and popular as ever. National coach Erich Ribbeck is counting on him for the Euro 2000 finals, and his fellow professionals in the Bundesliga have just voted him Player of the Year with 34.5 per cent, ahead of Brazilian midfielder Emerson (Leverkusen) and Marco Bode (Werder Bremen).

Matthaus first voiced his doubts about the timing of the transfer back in November. Injuries and suspensions had weakened Bayern, and he said he wanted to postpone his January 1 transfer until mid-March to help Bayern in the Champions League.

A transfer delay also would make Matthaus available for Bayern's first five games when the Bundesliga resumes following the winter break.

Agreement was reached after telephone and fax exchanges with MetroStars, whose then general manager Charles Stillitano said: "Coach Zambrano and I felt it was in the best interest of the team to have Lothar join us in the best possible playing shape. Playing these matches for Bayern ensures he joins the team physically fit, but with enough time to get acclimatised."

Matthaus, who had by then found an apartment in Manhattan, said: "Helping Bayern and then joining MetroStars in great shape, just before the start of the season, is the best of possible situations for everyone."

But all that was thrown up into the air when, early in January, Stillitano was replaced by Sakiewicz. Matthaus, who had agreed to sign when Stillitano had been in place and Bora Milutinovic had been coach, grew concerned.

German newspapers quoted him as having told friends that he felt he should have been consulted about the replacements, and accusing MetroStars of breach of contract.

Matthaus said: "That's not the way to do things. I won't put up with that. Suddenly, I have no motivation. They can't take me to New York in handcuffs. My contact people both have been fired. Now I am here without even a number I can call. I have been deceived and misled. They can do this with others, but not me."

Milutinovic had been replaced by Zambrano in late November after a

Barcelona, has now rolled back to Bordeaux – happily – three and a half years after he left.

He says he never imagined he might be leaving Marseille at the turn of the year. The violent reaction of their fans to the poor results had much to do with his decision. Even Dugarry finds it hard to explain just what has gone wrong at Marseille. True, he says, they've not got the means they once had.

How odd it is to think that the man who, in one odd way and another, initially provided them, the notorious Bernard Tapie, is now a smash hit in Paris playing the old Jack Nicholson role in the stage version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*! No joking.

So did the departure of Rolland Courbis in mid-season make a difference? Dugarry is not sure. "Perhaps in some people's heads, sentimentally. There's always some who are unhappy, some who are satisfied when a manager goes." He was sorry for the man rather than the manager, he says, Rolland being Rolland, but he was quite happy with his successor, Bernard Casoni.

Dugarry is still only 27 and he has come back to Bordeaux, he says, "to win, explode, progress. I'm at the age when I am at the height of my powers. It's a year and a half since I've rediscovered my whole potential, all my qualities."

He says that when he looked into the future, he knew he would come back to Bordeaux but did not know when. "I know now that this was the moment. Bordeaux can do a lot for me, as I can do a lot for Bordeaux."

There, he will now find gifted players who never do quite as much as they might for as long as they might.

Such as Sylvain Wiltord, the striker who has been playing so well since October but tends to fall away from time to time, and has such a cavalier attitude towards the media; that very experienced centre-forward Lilian Laslandes, who can still get goals, but has been criticised a good deal this season; and the highly skilled Johan Micoud, another inconsistent figure, sometimes accused of not getting sufficiently involved.

We shall have to see how all these and others get on with the ebullient, confident Dugarry, not least because tactics surely must change.

Oddly enough, one of the most promising French midfielders, Peter Luccin, has trodden the opposite path to Dugarry, having joined Marseille from Bordeaux, after making his debut with Cannes at 17. He was brought up in Marseille, though the club did not acquire him first time around.

Luccin is an Under-21 player; if he has a fault it is said to be that he finds it difficult to motivate himself for the less important games.

Andre Duclos

Heading stateside...Lothar Matthaus

shocking season. Stillitano, who was appointed general manager in November 1994, was replaced after failure on and off the field.

Sakiewicz, former general manager of Tampa Bay Mutiny, saw the Matthaus issue as his first challenge. He said: "There have been a number of changes and I can understand how Lothar feels. However, he has a contract with MLS, and I expect him to honour it and to be an important part of rebuilding the club. Once Lothar has a chance to hear the plans that Octavio and I have and meets us face to face, he will be more motivated."

The first part is right: Matthaus WILL join MetroStars in March. As for future success...

Keir Radnedge

Pro-file Rodolfo Cardoso

Hamburg's Argentinian is 'Das Comeback' king

AFTER almost five years of below-par performances and injury worries, Hamburg's born-again Argentinian playmaker Rodolfo Cardoso is again top of the bill in the Bundesliga.

Cardoso, now 31, enjoyed his heyday in the mid-90s, inspiring the little Freiburg club from the Black Forest to a remarkable third-place Bundesliga finish in 1994-95. But then it all went wrong. Moves to Werder Bremen and Hamburg proved wipeouts, and though his performance levels picked up during loan stints back in Argentina, with Boca Juniors and Estudiantes, neither would put him permanently on the payroll.

Last summer Hamburg reluctantly recalled him, but although he was allowed to train with the first team, coach Frank Pagelsdorf made it plain that Cardoso did not figure in his plans. However, he looked so sharp in pre-season training that Pagelsdorf felt obliged to give him a chance in an InterToto Cup-tie against Trabzonspor. Cardoso was so impressive in that and further warm-up games that his coach had no option but to retain him for the new Bundesliga season.

What the German sports media have dubbed 'Das Comeback' was now gathering unstoppable momentum. With Cardoso in dazzling creative form, Hamburg moved up to third at the winter break, and he was deservedly voted best attacking midfielder in the top flight by *Kicker* magazine.

No wonder general manager Bernd Wehmeyer was quick to seal a three-year extension to his contract.

"I couldn't be happier than I am right now," says Cardoso. "I'm staying clear of the injuries that have dogged me in past years and I'm really enjoying my football again. I love the responsibility of being chief playmaker, and in Tony Yeboah, Roy Prager and Mehdi Mahdavikia I have some great partners.

"It's as though I'm starting my career all over again. My dream is to be like Lothar Matthaus and carry on playing at the highest level until my late 30s. Right now, I feel anything is possible – even a recall to my national team in time for the next World Cup.

"I was initially not keen to return to Germany. I wanted to stay at Estudiantes and the only reason they didn't buy me was that they were so short of cash. I went back to Hamburg because I had no choice, being still under contract.

"But then I realised that Hamburg represented a last chance to keep my career alive and that I had to grab it."

He has done that, all right.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Hamburg (Ger)
Country Argentina
Born October 17, 1968, in Azul
Previous clubs AC Azul, Estudiantes de la Plata, FC Homburg (Ger), Freiburg (Ger), Werder Bremen (Ger), Hamburg (Ger), Boca Juniors, Estudiantes de la Plata
International debut December 1995, v Venezuela
International caps 8 (1 goal)

Given the elbow...Thatcher's foul on Summerbee cost him a place in the England squad

Keegan short on quality

The England manager could call up West Ham teenager Joe Cole to bridge the class divide, says Gavin Hamilton

KEVIN KEEGAN began 2000 as he ended the last century: seeking a left-sided player for a team that looks short on quality performers. The realisation is slowly dawning on the England coach that, aside from David Beckham and Michael Owen, he has few world-class performers at his disposal. And what with Beckham's antics in Rio and Owen's form suffering through injury, even they cannot be relied upon.

Keegan ruled Wimbledon left-back Ben Thatcher out of contention for England's next match, a friendly against Argentina on February 23, after his elbow on Sunderland's Nicky Summerbee was captured by TV cameras.

"He would probably have been in the next squad, but probably will not be now," Keegan said. "He was the one we have been looking at because he can play left side, centre-back and left-back. In my opinion he's the nearest to Stuart Pearce."

Pearce is now 37 but was recalled to the national team last season in the absence of any better, younger alternatives.

Keegan has also called up Coventry's Steve Froggatt, Steve Guppy of Leicester, Michael Ball (Everton) and Michael Gray (Sunderland) while likely first-choice left wing-back Graeme Le Saux has been out injured. In addition, central midfielders Jamie Redknapp and Tim Sherwood have been employed out of position on the left, neither with any great success.

The England coach, by nature an optimist, seems confident that he will find his man by the summer, and about his team's chances in the Low Countries, despite the doubts that have been raised following the play-off performances against Scotland and a tough Euro 2000 draw which grouped England with Germany, Portugal and Romania.

"Despite what people think, we've as much chance of winning the tournament as the Czech Republic, who won every qualifying game," Keegan said. "A lot of criticism following the play-off matches against Scotland was justified, but this is a new millennium. Throughout my career I've never looked back – only forwards."

Keegan is also keen to give West Ham protege Joe Cole a chance sooner rather than later, saying he was impressed by the youngster's progress this season.

Keegan continued: "Euro 2000 is not too early for Joe Cole if he continues the way he is going. I think he knows that. He has still got to make progress and he has got to make it fast – but Michael Owen did."

Manchester United returned from their Brazilian excursion to the business of playing catch-up in their quest to retain the Premiership title. However, they were off-key in a 1-1 draw with rivals Arsenal at Old Trafford before a 58,000-plus crowd – a record for the Premiership.

United's poor showing in the World Club Championship was greeted with a fair few 'told you so' comments, but there was general acknowledgment that the Brazil tournament was of a higher standard than expected.

United, who withdrew from the FA Cup in order to play in Rio, were not the only big name to be missing from the fifth round draw of the world's oldest cup competition. In fact, only eight of the last 16 were Premiership clubs, close to a record.

Liverpool, despite their recent mini-revival, were the biggest casualties of the fourth round. They went down at home to Blackburn.

Sunderland were another top-flight club to be knocked out, but only after a bizarre mix-up by referee Rob Harris in the 1-0 defeat by Tranmere at Prenton Park.

Tranmere defender Clint Hill was sent off in the final minute by Harris, who then failed to spot that a substitute, Stephen Frail, had been sent on in Hill's place, enabling Tranmere to carry on with 11 men. Sunderland's appeal for a replay was turned down by the FA.

One match that was replayed after another mix-up over substitutes led to the worst possible result for West Ham. They beat Aston Villa on penalties in the League Cup quarter-final after a 2-2 draw. But it was revealed later that sub Manny Omoyimni, who played the final seven minutes of extra time, had appeared earlier in the competition for Gillingham, where he had been on loan.

With red faces all round in East London, Villa appealed successfully for a replay, which they duly won 3-1.

SCOTLAND

Old Firm add strength

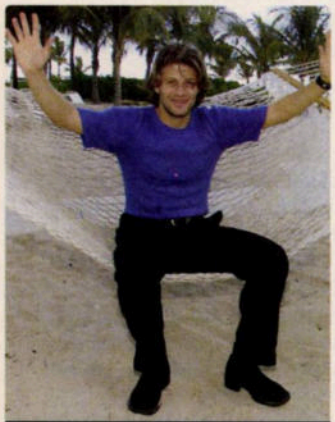
THE winter break, which has now become an integral part of the calendar, saw Rangers descend on the highly-amenable surroundings of Fort Lauderdale in Florida.

The players indulged in some light, warm-weather training, and were joined by their new Turkish team-mate, Tugay Kerimoglu.

Tugay arrives at Ibrox with impeccable references from the likes of Gheorghe Hagi, his team-mate at Galatasaray, and is expected to help fill the gaps left following the long-term injury to Michael Mols and the transfer of Argentinian striker Gabriel Amato to Gremio in Brazil.

The attack may also be boosted by a surprise return to action for Italian Marco Negri, absent from the first team for over two years but who impressed manager Dick Advocaat during the Florida excursion.

German midfielder Jorg Albertz, however, may be on his way out. Albertz, a great favourite with the fans, revealed that Advocaat made clear that he did not consider him good enough to be a first-team regular, and indicated that he feels the need to move on.



New Ranger...Tugay Kerimoglu

Rangers went into the spring campaign four points ahead of Celtic, with whom they drew 1-1 in the final Old Firm game of 1999. They increased that lead to six points in the first match back by hammering Aberdeen 5-0, while Celtic were held 1-1 at Kilmarnock.

Celtic, who chose Portugal as their temporary winter home, also welcomed a new foreign recruit, Rafael Scheidt, from Gremio – who immediately was ruled out of action with appendix trouble.

Alan Fairley

N.IRELAND

McIlroy has his work cut out

THE APPOINTMENT of former Manchester United midfielder Sammy McIlroy as manager of the national team has met with general approval among fans.

They are looking to 45-year-old McIlroy, who has been in charge at Third Division side Macclesfield for the past seven years, to restore Irish fortunes.

The major problem is the one that ultimately defeated the two previous national managers, Bryan Hamilton and Lawrie McMenemy: the dearth of players of true international class.

McIlroy already has opened the door to 'outcasts' Gerry Taggart, Jim Magilton and Danny Sonner, who were out of favour for disciplinary reasons under the previous regime. But his biggest problem is finding a player who can score goals at the highest level.

The new boss at least has a few friendlies lined up before World Cup qualifying begins. Northern Ireland are away to Luxembourg (February 22) and Malta (March 28), and home to Hungary (April 26).

With a third of the championship still to play, Linfield now seem certain winners. The only team who had a remote chance of stopping them were rejuvenated Coleraine, but Marty Quinn's team came a cropper against Cliftonville – the team he had left a couple of months earlier.

That defeat was closely followed by another, Coleraine going down 3-0 to Linfield at Windsor Park.

Roy Kitson

WALES

Llanelli's lads surprise champions

LLANELLI surprised the pundits by beating defending champions Barry Town in a thrilling encounter. Goals by League leading scorer Mark Dickeson and Andy Hill secured a 2-1 victory in front of 1,410, Llanelli's highest crowd of the season. The result left them four points behind Barry but with two matches in hand.

Caernarfon Town, having sacked manager Paul Rowlands and the entire first-team squad, have appointed former Wrexham striker Dixie McNeil as new team boss. He faces a tough fight, however, to save them from relegation.

Mel Thomas

Pro-file Robbie Keane

Teenage goal machine confounding the doubters

PREMIERSHIP managers who questioned the talents of Republic of Ireland striker Robbie Keane are starting to look a little foolish.

His availability was in little doubt for several months as First Division Wolves were openly attempting to generate finances to fund a push for promotion, but there was a decided reluctance among top-flight bosses to consider meeting the £6million asking price.

"I would pay no more than £500,000 for that lad and leave him in my reserve team," was the reported assessment of Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson.

Tottenham and Aston Villa were apparently more interested in the young Dubliner, who has been making waves ever since representing the Republic in their highly successful youth teams. Yet neither would agree to meet what was perceived to be a hefty fee for a 19-year-old who still had plenty to prove.

Instead it was Coventry City, surprisingly, who succeeded in luring Keane, and they have been reaping the rewards ever since. The little goalscoring phenomenon has been at the centre of their recent revival that included a glorious Boxing Day win over Arsenal, when he produced a majestic winner.

"I want to test myself against the best every week and that is why I had no hesitation in accepting Coventry's offer," says Keane. "I saw it as a perfect step up. The Premiership is where any player wants to be."

Given Keane's form to date, there is little surprise that he has aroused interest in Europe. Internazionale claim that Coventry have agreed to give them first option if and when they choose to sell him, with the potential fee being touted as £10m-plus. Inter, however, are likely to have a long wait, according to Coventry boss Gordon Strachan, who says: "We have big things planned and Robbie is part of them. I always knew he had great ability and I think I've been proved right."

Keane has backed up his credentials with outstanding performances in Ireland's Euro 2000 qualifying near miss, and is the first of the new batch of Republic stars to emerge into the limelight.

"I know a lot is expected of me back home, but I feel I'm up to the challenge," he says. "There has been plenty of hype around me in the last few months, but now I have the chance to concentrate on my football."

Coventry hope that he continues to do it – for as long as they can hang on to him.

Kevin Palmer

Fact file

Club Coventry (Eng)
Country Republic of Ireland
Born July 8, 1980, in Dublin
Previous club Wolves (Eng)
International debut March 1998, v Czech Republic
International caps 13 (5 goals)
Honours European Youth Championship 1998

PSV plan to quit Dutch League

Klaas-Jan Droppert on the push for a new European set-up

HOLLAND

PSV EINDHOVEN have caused a stir during the winter break by announcing that they will leave the Dutch League in 2002.

They want to join a future European league of clubs from smaller footballing nations that could include the likes of Rangers, Anderlecht, Panathinaikos and FC Porto.

PSV chairman, Harry Van Raaij, says the club have no choice but to break away if they want to go on competing against top European clubs and getting a share of the big money from television and other deals.

Ajax and Feyenoord, the others in Holland's Big Three, have the same plans, but PSV were the first to make the announcement.

Most other clubs were disappointed with the news, saying that a competition without the top three would be less attractive, both in sporting terms and financially.

Jaap Uilenberg, removed from the referees' list last year, having reached the age limit of 47, is returning to his old job after successfully claiming that he was the victim of discrimination.

Uilenberg, one of Holland's best referees before his forced retirement, took legal advice, and a court has now decided that using an age limit to judge whether a referee is capable or not is illegal.

Things to come?...PSV hope to play the likes of Rangers on a regular basis

"My case could open the door for many referees in various sports," says the 'new Bosman'.

Coach Co Adriaanse will leave Willem II at the end of the season, despite the club's offer of a new one-year contract. "Last year we were runners-up and the next thing would be the championship, but that isn't possible with the current squad," he said. Adriaanse probably will move to Utrecht, but there are rumours that he is a candidate to replace Jan Wouters if Ajax do not improve very soon.

RKC's Rick Hoogendorp has joined Spain's Celta Vigo on loan for the rest of the season.

BELGIUM

Standard head for better times

STANDARD LIEGE have instigated a huge upheaval in recent weeks with the aim of restoring the club to former glories.

Croatian coach Zeljko Mijac has gone, after a brief period in charge following the departure of his compatriot Tomislav Ivic, and the striking Mpenza brothers have left as well.

Former Anderlecht player Jean Thissen is the new coach, operating under Ivic's scrutiny in his role as technical director.

The players immediately responded to the change, resuming after the winter break with a 4-2 win at Mechelen and following up with a 4-0 home defeat of Westerlo. Three of the eight goals came from Michael Goossens, who played for the club for four years from 1990 and has now returned from Schalke.

Goossens acted as a makeweight in the £5.5million deal that took Emile Mpenza to Schalke, while his older brother, Mbo, went to Sporting Lisbon for £1.8m. Portuguese left-back Manuel Dimas, from Fenerbahce, and another full-back, David Brocken, from Anderlecht, also arrived at Standard. However, veteran midfielder Enzo Scifo decided against a move in the same direction. Scifo intends to end his career with a two-year contract at Charleroi and then become president there.

Anderlecht expected to maintain their seven-point lead at Beveren's expense but were held 0-0. Kris Van De Putte was in goal for Beveren instead of Tristan Peersman – coveted by Anderlecht – who escaped with a four-match ban after pushing the referee during his side's 3-2 home defeat by Club Brugge.

TV replays confirmed that Peersman had been provoked by Vital Borkelmans, who scored the first Brugge goal in unsportsmanlike fashion when Beveren assumed that play had been stopped so that he could be treated for injury.

Brugge, who have sold high-scoring Lithuanian Edgaras Jankauskas to Real Sociedad, reduced the gap on Anderlecht with a 1-0 win at struggling St Truiden and a 6-1 pummelling of Lokeren.

Nicholas Harling

PORTUGAL

Jardel doubles put Porto clear

THE season's first half came to an end with the Big Three leading the way. Four goals from Jardel, two each in the wins over Estrela Amadora and Gil Vicente, allowed Porto to increase their lead to three points over Sporting, who themselves went five ahead of Benfica.

The two Lisbon sides drew 0-0 in the last derby game of the half-season. Benfica, playing at home and with new Egyptian defender Abdelsatar Sabry in their line-up, had to manage without coach Jupp Heynckes, in bed with flu. But though Sporting had the players and the organisation to have run off with the points, they let the chance of victory slide away.

Boavista, the great sensations of last season, have been having a much harder ride this time, though they are still fifth.

Guimaraes (fourth), Maritimo (sixth) and Belenenses (seventh) have again shown that they are forces to be reckoned with, on their day. Unfortunately, those days are not frequent enough.

Belenenses seem certain to hold on to the distinction of being the only club apart from the Big Three to have won the championship, way back in 1947.

Alberto da Silva

SWITZERLAND

Huber gets brush-off from Hodgson

GRASSHOPPER coach Roy Hodgson stunned club and Switzerland goalkeeper Stefan Huber by telling him that he would be only No 2 for the championship play-offs.

Hodgson, who later clinched the signing of Slovan Bratislava's 27-year-old keeper, Miroslav Koenig,

capped 19 times for Slovakia, said: "Stefan Huber has had a poor season and at 34 in a few months he is not getting any younger. He was directly responsible for the 2-1 defeat at St Gallen, which cost us precious points after we had gone ahead. If he wants to leave, he can."

Huber admitted he had had a wretched season, but said this was due to recurring injuries and a three-game suspension which affected his fitness.

Grasshopper and St Gallen clash again in the opening game of the eight-team final stage when the winter break ends on March 12. The Zurich side have been strengthened by the return of 27-year-old playmaker Antonio Esposito after a 15-month spell with Extremadura in Spain.

Time is running out in the search for a national team coach in succession to Gilbert Gress. After rebuffs from Christian Gross (Basle), Andy Egli (Lucerne) and Marcel Koller (St Gallen), and with a training camp scheduled in Oman from February 16-24, plus three friendlies, the FA is being forced to widen its net.

Argentinian Enzo Trossero, fired by Lugano at the start of the season,

Out in the cold...Stefan Huber

Bo Johansson of Denmark and German Uli Stielike are three of the likelier prospects.

Sion coach Roberto Morini has been released to return to Lugano, without a manager since Giuliano Sonzogni was fired in October.

Adrian Kunz has been loaned by Werder Bremen to Aarau, and Kubilay Turkyilmaz has returned to Second Division leaders Bellinzona after his three-month stint with Lucerne, where his six goals helped them qualify for the championship play-offs.

Swiss international Murat Yakin is still on the run from Fenerbahce. He was in Turkey at the time of the recent earthquakes and says he is terrified of being caught in one.

The former Grasshopper midfielder said his agent was negotiating for a possible move to Kaiserslautern in Germany, though Fenerbahce are demanding £4.3million for his release.

Ivar von Rulach

REP IRELAND

McCarthy confident despite tough start

NATIONAL team manager Mick McCarthy says he is happy with the opening World Cup qualifying fixtures, which see the Irish travel to Holland in September and Portugal in October. "We caught Croatia cold at the start of the last Euro qualifiers and I believe we can catch the Dutch and Portuguese on the hop again," he said.

McCarthy will have to plan his World Cup campaign without Denis Irwin. The 34-year-old Manchester United defender says he is quitting international football.

Liam Buckley won the Premier Division in his first season in charge at St Patrick's Athletic, but that obviously was not enough for the club. This season the Saints have struggled and managing director Pat Dolan, who 'moved upstairs' to bring in Buckley, is now back in charge, though probably too late to catch the other Dublin sides, Shelbourne, Bohemians and Shamrock Rovers.

Cork City, lying third, also are still in with a shout, and had the honour of scoring the first League goal of the new millennium. To celebrate, sponsors Guinness provided scorer Anthony Buckley with 366 bottles of the black stuff, one for each day of this leap year.

Non-League clubs Bangor Celtic and Bluebell United were the giant killers in the second round of the FAI Cup, beating Premier clubs Drogheda United and Sligo Rovers respectively.

Leeds United, who have a big Irish contingent, have formed an alliance with Dublin schoolboy club Home Farm. The Premiership club will provide funds for coaching, and in turn will have first option on boys from the Farm.

Arsenal, another club with strong Irish connections, have signed 15-year-old Shane Bradley – rated the hottest talent on the Irish schools scene – from Dublin club Lourdes.

Sean Creedon

Pro-file Aldo Pedro Duscher

Italy beckons for the young Sporting Lisbon midfielder

YET another exciting prospect from that fertile footballing nursery, Argentina, 20-year-old Aldo Pedro Duscher seemingly has the world of Serie A at his feet.

Fiorentina are rumoured to be monitoring the Sporting Lisbon midfielder's every move, while Parma are willing to table a £10million bid.

The smart money, though, is on Duscher starting next season in Milan. Reports in Lisbon claim that Internazionale are prepared to offer £17m, plus Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano or Portuguese midfield warrior Paulo Sousa, for Duscher and his equally impressive partner in the Sporting engine room, Delfim. And we know that what the Milanese want, they invariably get.

Luis Duque, who was appointed Sporting Lisbon's director of football last autumn, insists that the pair are staying put, that the club have too much ambition to contemplate parting with their two most accomplished young players. Yet Duque must know only too well that their financial resources are far too thinly spread to be able to say no to the Italian millions.

No doubt it will be a huge blow to Sporting if they lose such a promising talent as Duscher, a brilliant all-purpose midfielder who can play just as well in a screening role in front of the defence or as a classic No 10. But the profit his club should make from the deal will provide huge consolation.

After all, when Duscher followed Croat coach Mirko Jozic from Newell's Old Boys of Rosario to Lisbon back in the summer of 1998, the fee was a mere £1.7m.

It is not surprising that a number of Italian scouts are pitching Duscher's name to their paymasters. He has been in outstanding form this season, showing energy, grit and impeccable distribution as his side have surged to second place in the table behind FC Porto, after a sluggish start. And there is genuine belief in the Sporting camp that their first national title since 1982 could be within reach.

"The players are sick of the talk about how this club always promises a lot and then disappears from the championship race by Christmas," says Duscher. "We have destroyed that myth this season. We believe in ourselves and are learning how to knuckle down to get good results, even when we have an occasional off-day. Porto can't be champions for ever. They won the title for the last five years. It's time for their run to end.

"Some people laughed at me at the start of the season when I said we were working to be champions. We're still very much in the hunt and really motivated."

Duscher's future may lie in Italy. But for the next few months the priority is this Sporting life.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Country Argentina
Born March 29, 1979, in Rosario
Previous club Newell's Old Boys

Buddhist bounces back

DENMARK

Jim Holden on a strange twist to a Euro hero's tale

LARS ELSTRUP, the former Danish international striker, has come out of a six-year retirement in a religious sect to try to resume his career at the age of 36 with OB Odense.

Soon after Elstrup had been one of the heroes of Denmark's fairytale 1992 European Championship triumph, he dramatically quit soccer to enter the Buddhist-style 'Wild Goose' sect, at their farmhouse headquarters outside Odense, the home of Hans Christian Andersen.

Elstrup ditched his beautiful girlfriend, refused to have any contact with his family for years, but claimed he had found spiritual peace and happiness among the white-robed sect members in their total retreat from society.

He explained his decision by saying that he could not cope with the pressure of being a celebrity sportsman and that football was not a life he could lead happily. A couple of TV documentaries in Denmark probed his new lifestyle, but the notoriety soon passed.

New goals...Lars Elstrup dreams of a return to glory at 36

But now Elstrup has reappeared on the scene, short of money but full of ambition. "I want to start playing again," he said. "I'd like to buy a house on the coast, have a shop in Odense, get my place back in the national side and play in the Euro 2000 finals."

When sceptical journalists asked if that was realistic, Elstrup was upset. "Why do you have to be so negative?" he said. "Why can't you be positive?"

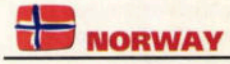
OB Odense, struggling in the Danish Superliga two points above the relegation zone at the winter break, felt they had to give their former star a chance. Elstrup turned up for indoor training, but was left shattered after his first hour-long session.

His request for £100 per day was turned down by the club, but they agreed to a trial period to see if he could make it back to big-time football. He is due to play in an indoor tournament that will probably settle the issue.

Another of the heroes of 1992, defender Torben Piechnik, was fired after only three months from a consultancy role at AGF Aarhus.

Several young Danes have spent the past month on trial at foreign clubs. Striker Soren Frederiksen tried his luck at Leicester and Ipswich, while Diego Tur had a spell at Manchester City and Jesper Kristensen had a try-out at Norwich.

Buzzing...Jan Derek Sorensen


NORWAY

Coaches upset by early start

EURO 2000 has forced the domestic league to make the earliest ever start to a season, with the first fixtures scheduled for April 9. This has angered many coaches, who say that pitches are not ready at that time of year and will be damaged.

An obvious alternative would be to play some of the matches on full-scale indoor pitches, but the Norwegian FA is against the idea.

Rosenborg tested their early form against Duisburg and PSV Eindhoven on Gran Canaria, but failed to repeat last year's tournament victory, losing 3-2 to the Dutch in the Final. Newcomer Morten Knutsen showed that he will be a good acquisition, and Jan Derek Sorensen continued as he finished last season – in brilliant form.

Popular veteran Mini Jacobsen announced after the tournament that he will hang up his boots when Rosenborg are out of the Champions League, so he has played his last domestic season.

Lillestrom's successes in 1999

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caught the attention of foreign clubs and the fact that Icelander Heidar Helguson was bought by Watford in January for £1.5million came as no surprise. The 22-year-old, who scored 16 goals last season, was also on target on his debut in England.

Stabaek's international goalkeeper, Frode Olsen, was on the verge of moving abroad on several occasions last year but his club would not let him go. Olsen's frustration grew, and when Spanish club Sevilla made a loan offer, Stabaek could hold him no longer.

National manager Nils Johan Semb is far from happy with the status of several players who are either injured or not in their club first team, including goalkeeper Thomas Myhre and defenders Vegard Heggem, Ronny Johnsen and Henning Berg.

Semb and his assistant, Harald Aabrekk, spend a lot of time visiting players based abroad. "I follow 50 quite closely," says Semb, "and I can guarantee that everyone will get a chance. Of these I estimate 35 to be in contention for a place in the squad for Euro 2000."

Sigurd Odegaard

SWEDEN

Co-management raises questions

THE PROMOTION of Lars Lagerback to co-manage the national team with Tommy Soderberg has raised a number of questions about how the partnership will work.

The most significant concerns who will make the final decision if there is a crisis during a match.

"I agree on most things in football with Tommy," says Lagerback, formerly Soderberg's assistant. "But if there is a difference of opinion, we have our ways of working it out."

For his part, Soderberg says: "Lasse is the most brilliant football analyst currently walking on earth."

Lagerback, 51, has been an eminent influence throughout the 1990s. A modest player, he took to coaching early and has worked for the local FA since 1990, in various youth posts. Lagerback won praise for his expert analysis of opponents during the 1994 World Cup finals, when Sweden finished third.

IFK Gothenburg have added three players to their squad from local rivals Frolunda – midfielder Mikael Sandklef and strikers Tomas Rosenkvist and Gustaf Andersson. But 18-year-old midfielder Zlatan Muslimovic could well be on his way to Udinese.

Champions Helsingborgs, who have sold their Norwegian star Arild Stavrum to Aberdeen, could be losing another striker, with big Magnus Powell being courted by Norway's Lillestrom.

Pentti Hietanen

Double act...the Sweden team

FINLAND

Discord at Jazz

THE TAX authorities recently raided the offices of Pori side FC Jazz and accused the club of concealing gate income.

Jazz officials later admitted this to be true, although they disagreed about the amount of money involved.

Although the guilty directors are no longer with the club, the scandal could seriously hinder Jazz's preparations for the new season. The club were Finnish champions in 1993 and 1996.

HJK Helsinki chairman Olli-Pekka Lyytikainen has expressed his fears that the domestic League is quickly becoming a nursery for Norwegian clubs. "Some players and agents think that with more and more players leaving, those remaining could increase their earnings," said Lyytikainen. "But the player drain could have exactly the opposite effect as the local league continues to be devalued."

The latest to hop on the bandwagon is Under-21 midfielder Miika Koppinen, who has left FC Jaro for Tromso.

FC Jokerit signed striker Shefki Kuqi from HJK and former national team stopper Kari Rissanen from Denmark's FC Mid-Jutland.

Pentti Hietanen

Pro-file Teemu Tainio

Finnish midfielder finally coming good in France

AUXERRE'S success has always been based more on their ability to nurture French talent than recruit from abroad. But when coach Guy Roux does go shopping overseas, he rarely misses the target – and in up-and-coming Finnish playmaker Teemu Tainio he seems to have made another fine buy.

Over the past two decades, Auxerre have benefited from the sterling service of a small corps of migrants: the Polish trio of keeper Marjan Szeja, stopper Pawel Janas and striker Andrzej Szarmach; Hungarian forward Kalman Kovacs; Dutch sweeper Frank Verlaat; and Algerian midfielder Moussa Saib. Now Tainio, who was bought from FC Haka in autumn 1997 for a bargain £400,000, is shaping up to follow their shining example.

Both a maker and taker of goals this season, 20-year-old Tainio is just the sort of attacking midfielder Guy Roux appreciates – quick, bright as a button technically, and young.

The Finn's efforts have helped Auxerre deliver much more than expected this term, going into the New Year in third place in the French championship.

But as former Auxerre favourite Jean-Marc Ferreri points out, it is only relatively recently that the Finn has looked the part. "It has taken Tainio the best part of two years to find his feet in French football, but it's understandable," says Ferreri. "It's hard enough to move abroad when you're young, but he's had his share of injuries, too, and an already difficult situation was made so much worse.

"But he has come through all those early problems and is now showing everybody just what a good player he can be. He is very nimble, is neat in his ball-control and passing, and is positive in everything he does. He has no fear, and that is really important for a young pro."

Tainio has long been regarded as a would-be standard bearer for Finnish football. At only 16, he was turning on the style for then reigning champions FC Haka from Valkeakoski, and though his club were relegated in 1996, there was a consolation prize for Tainio in the form of an offer from PSV Eindhoven.

But the youngster decided the migrating game could wait, and continued to excel for FC Haka, helping them go straight back to the top flight and win the 1997 Cup Final. A few weeks later, Tainio was packing his bags for Auxerre.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Auxerre (Fra)
Country Finland
Born November 27, 1979, in Valkeakoski
Previous club FC Haka
International debut February 1998, v Cyprus
International caps 5 (0 goals)
Honours Finnish Cup 1997

Zeman quits after 11 games

Hasan Cemali on the Czech coach's very short reign at Fenerbahce

Quick exit...Zdenek Zeman

TURKEY

FENERBAHCE won the first derby of the new millennium, beating Besiktas 2-1. However, they did it without their Czech manager, Zdenek Zeman, who quit on the eve of the game after only 11 matches in charge.

Zeman's departure stirred up the conspiracy theorists, with rumours abounding of a player plot against him. The basis for this suggestion was that the coach brought in a 4-3-3 system to which his players objected. Zeman then accused them of being lazy and inattentive to his instructions.

Fenerbahce won only three games under Zeman, lost critical matches against Trabzonspor and Galatasaray, and were eliminated from the Turkish Cup by Second Division Pendikspor. In addition, star midfielder Sergen Yalcin was thrown out of the club, apparently at Zeman's behest, and joined rivals Galatasaray. He replaces Tugay Kerimoglu, who has been sold to Rangers.

Assistant coach Turhan Sofuoglu became caretaker, switched to a 3-5-2 line-up, and began with that win over Besiktas. Last season he trained the Fenerbahce youth team with considerable success.

Galatasaray's winning streak continues and they are odds-on to win a record fourth consecutive championship. A 3-1 victory over Altay in Istanbul put Gala 12 points ahead of Gaziantepspor and Besiktas.

On the international front, national coach Mustafa Denizli has reached agreement with the federation and renewed his contract.

GREECE

Zahovic set to return

NOT TOO long ago Slovenian international Zlatko Zahovic called Greek players lazy, the Greek League sub-standard, and said he wanted nothing to do with the country.

Now, following a two-month strike, the forward has stated that he wants to return to his club, Olympiakos Piraeus. During that time, the Greek champions refused to release the player, even though three Spanish teams were reportedly interested in signing him.

"My return to Piraeus is a question of days – I will never forget my guilt in all this," he told Slovenian newspaper *Vester*. "I asked Olympiakos for guarantees over my return. They gave them to me and I will be going back to Athens."

In the meantime, Olympiakos have signed 19-year-old striker Lambros Choutos from Roma for a reported £3.3million. The Greece Under-21 star signed a four-and-a-half year contract worth £2.6m.

Former Olympiakos coach Dusan Bayevic, who resigned in November, has taken over at PAOK Salonika.

Vasilis Borbokis, formerly with English Premiership side Derby County, also has joined PAOK.

AEK Athens fired coach Ljubisa Tubakovic after a disappointing showing. He has been replaced by Yiannis Pathiakakis.

Lou Economopoulos

YUGOSLAVIA

FA takes control

PROBLEMS concerning refereeing and hooliganism, as well as allegations about match-fixing, have prompted the FA to take action to establish order in the domestic game.

The governing body has now taken control of all competitions previously administered by the Association of First Division Clubs, and has sacked five officials.

As for Obilic Belgrade – leaders after the first stage of the season – only time will tell whether they remain among the most successful clubs in the country following the death of Zeljko Raznatovic. The militia leader, better known as Arkan, who had been indicted for war crimes by the United Nations, had officially retired from his role at the club, but in reality was still the owner.

Vladimir Novak

CROATIA

Suker is first choice

ARSENAL's Davor Suker will be going back to Croatia soon to collect another trophy to add to his collection after he came top of a national poll to choose the Croatian Player of the Millennium.

The Best Croatian XI was: Vladimir Beara – Slaven Bilic, Velimir Zajec, Branko Zebec – Rudolf Belin, Zlatko Cajkovski, Zvonimir Boban, Bernard Vukas, Robert Jarni – Drazen Jerkovic, Davor Suker.

Financial problems are mounting at FC Croatia, and have forced the sale of Tomislav Rukavina to Venezia and Krunoslav Jurcic to Torino.

● AT LAST all three entities in **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA** are to unite. It seems likely that from next season there will be one major league of 16 clubs, eight from the current Muslim league, and four each from the Serbian and Croatian entities.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Euro tickets are hot

ICE and snow hold Slovenia in their grip at present, but the fans are hot

Number one...Davor Suker

for soccer. At a recent count, 5,234 supporters had registered for Euro 2000 tickets, and the total could well double. These are healthy figures for a country with a population of only 1.8 million.

On the home front, Maribor have reinforced their team by buying Ismet Ekmecic, top scorer for their biggest rivals, Olimpija. They also signed another Olimpija player, Nastja Ceh, as well as Fabijan Cipot from Mura.

Zdravko Reic

ALBANIA

Zhega returns to national scene

MEHDIN ZHEGA, who won 14 caps for Albania in the 1960s, has returned to the football scene by succeeding Astrit Hafizi as national team coach. Little has been seen of the new boss since he had a spell as coach to the Under-21 squad in the 1980s.

Goalkeeper Foto Strakosha has retired from international football, though he will continue to play with Ionikos in Greece. Another player based in Greece, Bledar Kola of Panathinaikos, has been named Albanian Footballer of the Year.

Gezim Nushi

ISRAEL

Shum retained to aid Moller Nielsen

RICHARD MOLLER NIELSEN's first game in charge of the national team will be a home friendly against Russia on February 23. The Dane has been offered a 29-month term, and officially takes over from Shlomo Scharf at the beginning of February.

The FA has retained Yitzhak Shum as coach of the Under-21s in an effort to ensure some degree of continuity at national level. Shum acted as Scharf's assistant with the senior squad and is expected to help Moller Nielsen become acquainted with the players.

In the Premier League, Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Tel Aviv continue to race ahead at the top.

At the bottom, Hapoel Jerusalem coach Michel Dayan resigned following a clutch of defeats, only to be reinstated within a week when no replacement could be found.

Maccabi Herzliya had a similar problem following Nissim Bachar's resignation. His assistant, Eli Driks, has now taken over.

Derek Fattal

MALTA

England game tops centenary bill

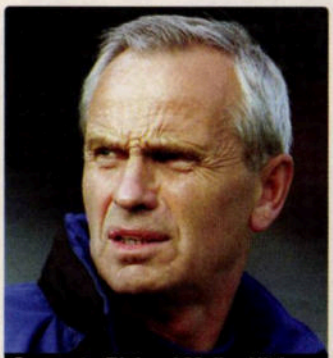
THE friendly between Malta and England on June 3 is the highlight of the centenary celebrations arranged by the Maltese FA. Dr Joe Mifsud, the president, said: "We deemed it appropriate to share this special moment with the English, who undoubtedly had a big influence on our game during the colonial years."

The centenary programme started with a friendly against Qatar in Valletta, which Malta won 2-0, with the next event being the Rothmans tournament in February, when Malta host Albania, Andorra and Azerbaijan.

The celebrations end with the opening of the revamped East Stand at the National stadium and the Final of the first Centenary Cup.

Czech striker Pavel Mraz was back with a bang for Valletta after an eight-month FIFA ban for an alleged bribery attempt in connection with an InterToto Cup game, when he was still at Sliema. His two goals against Rabat kept Valletta in contact with Birkirkara, who lead by seven points.

Domenico Aquilina



Support...Richard Moller Nielsen

CYPRUS

Ton up for Rauffmann

OMONIA's German striker, Rainer Rauffmann, has now scored 100 goals in Cyprus League games since moving to the island in the summer of 1997.

His next target is to beat the single-season record, held by Sotiris Kaiafas, who scored 44 in 1977.

Yugoslav coach Radmilo Ivancevic has quit AEK Larnaca, taking responsibility for bad results and his choice of three foreign players.

Soulis Theodosiou

MACEDONIA

Wanted - some opposition

THE biggest problem faced by the national team is finding opponents for friendlies before the World Cup qualifiers kick off. However, national coach Dragan Kanatlarovski has been able to run his eye over some players with Macedonian origins after visiting Australia with his club side, Pobeda.

Djoko Hadzievski, Kanatlarovski's predecessor, is now in charge of Japanese champions Jubilo Iwata.

Michel Stojmanovski

Pro-file Yossi Benayoun

Diamond Kid with a brilliant future

YOSSI BENAYOUN, a 19-year-old soldier, is the biggest prospect in Israeli soccer.

Known as the Diamond Kid, he currently plays for League leaders Maccabi Haifa, but after May 2002, when he finishes his three-year stint as a physical training instructor in the Israeli defence forces, he is certain to be destined for one of the big European leagues.

Benayoun was touted as a hot talent from early childhood. His father, a refuse worker, spared no effort and every day drove his son to training at Hapoel Beersheba from their home town of Dimona in the middle of the Negev desert, a round trip of some 90km.

The whole of Israel then took note when Benayoun joined Ajax's youth set-up in 1996, but cultural differences and a longing for his mother's cooking saw him return to his home country within a few months.

Back in Israel, Benayoun rejoined Hapoel Beersheba, but could not help the club avoid relegation from the top flight at the end of the 1997-98 season.

However, Benayoun was soon smiling again when Maccabi Haifa president Ya'acov Shahar, the most astute and successful club boss in Israeli soccer, bought the rights to his contract in a complex deal said to be worth around £600,000.

The youngster was once described by Ze'ev Zeltzer, head coach of Israel's junior sides, as "more talented than Michael Owen". He is certainly of similar build to Owen and is immensely quick on his feet, but he plays a similar game to that of Celtic's Eyal Berkovic, a former Maccabi Haifa player. However, Benayoun plays further up the field than Berkovic and scores far more often.

He also has made his mark in the national team, scoring four goals in six appearances, the first of which was in a friendly against Portugal in November 1998.

The then Israel coach, Shlomo Scharf, was reluctant to utilise Benayoun in the senior team for some time, but once he outgrew his Under-18 status and began making his mark with Maccabi Haifa, Scharf could not help but take notice.

Benayoun's sudden changes of pace and direction make him a nightmare to mark, although he will need more beef on his body if he is to be able to compete in the far tougher environments of the major European leagues.

Until he is available to play abroad, however, Israeli soccer fans are certain to continue to enjoy Benayoun's exploits.

Ori Lewis

Fact file

Club Maccabi Haifa
Country Israel
Born September 5, 1980
Previous club Hapoel Beersheba
International debut November 1998, v Portugal
International caps 6 (4 goals)

Bust-up at Steaua

The club is in the grip of a power struggle, writes Bob Vaughan

ROMANIA

MARIUS LACATUS, one of the most successful Romanian players of all time, is having problems as his playing career nears an end.

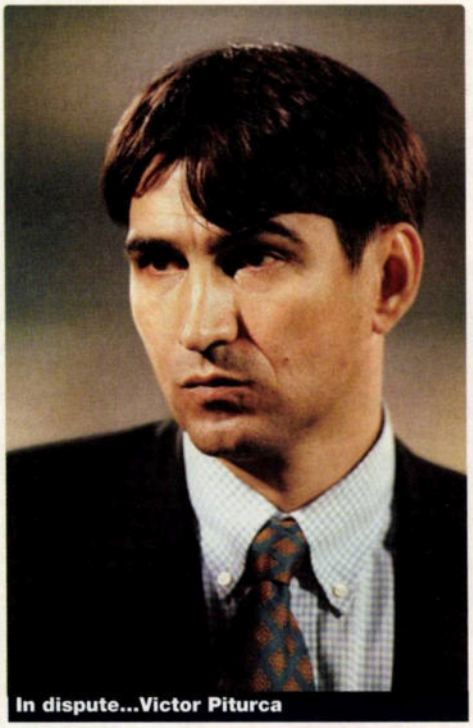
"Perhaps it's best if I take a long holiday," he said as an awkward situation built up at his club side, Steaua. "But I'm sure I'll be back."

Not everybody shares his optimism, however, because 36-year-old Lacatus, the captain and assistant coach at the club, is in dispute with coach Victor Piturca, who wants him out.

Piturca views Lacatus as a dangerous rival because he has been mooted as a possible director of football at the club. Consequently, the coach wants to appoint three new assistants and sees no place for Lacatus.

Piturca joined Steaua on losing his place as national team manager last year following a notorious televised row with Gheorghe Hagi, the country's most-capped player. According to the coach, Romania would have qualified for this year's European Championship even if Hagi had not made his much-publicised comeback, and won his 116th cap, in the match against Hungary.

The row between Lacatus and Piturca blew up after Steaua had completed their worst half-season for years. They will kick off the spring programme in seventh place, a massive 24 points behind League leaders Dinamo.



In dispute...Victor Piturca

UKRAINE

Big chance for Demetradze

THIS YEAR Georgian international Georgi Demetradze will face probably the most challenging phase in his career. At the end of December he signed for three years with Kyiv Dynamo, who are aiming to increase their attacking potential for the forthcoming Champions League matches against Real Madrid, Rosenborg and Bayern Munich.

Since Andrii Shevchenko's move to Milan last summer, the sharpness of the Dynamo attack has been blunted. But 23-year-old Demetradze impressed both Kyiv Dynamo boss Grygoriy Surkis and head coach Valerii Lobanovskyi with his skill and aggressive style last season in Russia, where he finished top of the scoring charts with 21 goals for Alaniya Vladikavkaz.

Demetradze, who began his career at Dinamo Tbilisi and has had a spell at Feyenoord, is a regular in the Georgian national team, having made his debut in 1998.

"Demetradze is a born finisher," says Lobanovskyi. "He is very quick and lively."

Kyiv also have signed goalkeeper Marian Maruschak from Second Division FC Lviv and Ukraine international Roman Maxymyuk from Zenit St Petersburg.

Meanwhile, Oleg Pestrakov from Russian club Rostselmash has signed a contract with Shakhtar Donetsk.

Oleg Zadernovsky

RUSSIA

Lokomotiv aim to derail Spartak

LOKOMOTIV MOSCOW stand higher than any other Russian club in the UEFA ratings, but at home they are still in the shadow of Moscow Spartak, who have won the title in seven years out of eight and beat their city rivals 3-0 in both League meetings last season.

Now Lokomotiv manager Yuri Syomin is all out to change this situation when the new Russian campaign begins on March 25.

In preparation he has extended the contracts of Alexei Smertin, Russia's 1999 Player of the Year, and Lokomotiv's best forward, Zaza Dzhanashia of Georgia, as well as making some new signings. These have included Moscow Dinamo's top striker Oleg Teryokhin, Alaniya's experienced goalkeeper Zaur Khapov and Spartak midfielder Vadim Yevseev.

Spartak in turn have signed Bulgarian international Hristo Yovov from 1860 Munich.

Rotor Volgograd, who barely survived in the top division last season, are living through hard times. Threats to players have become commonplace and the club's property has been repeatedly set on fire.

As if this were not enough, top striker Oleg Veretennikov was arrested at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport when he failed to declare $2,500 later found in his bag by customs officials. Veretennikov was released on bail and left for Italy en route to Greece.

He is looking for a contract with Aris Salonika, but could face a five-year jail sentence.

Victor Gusev

CZECH REP

Sparta add to squad

CHAMPIONS Sparta boosted their squad ahead of the resumption of the domestic championship and Champions League by persuading Pavel Hapal to join them rather than merely sit on the bench at Tenerife.

Coach Ivan Hasek also managed to sign Under-21 skipper Roman Lengyel on a lengthy contract, but more strengthening is still required if Champions League football is to be guaranteed for next season.

Over the winter break national players based with clubs at home have been training and relaxing in Hong Kong, playing friendlies against local sides.

Bob Vaughan

SLOVAKIA

Labant tops the poll

SOCCER's problems in the country – and there are many – were forgotten for an evening when the annual awards were presented in Bratislava.

Vladimir Labant, the 25-year-old who had an exceptional season with Slavia Prague and won his first cap for Slovakia, was named Player of the Year, with Lubomir Moravcik of Celtic second and Miroslav Karhan of Betis Sevilla third.

National team goalkeeper Miroslav Koenig, who has just joined Grasshopper from Slovan Bratislava, was unlucky to be only seventh after setting a Slovakian League record by going 1,129 minutes without conceding a goal.

Football in Slovakia was given a boost when UEFA chose the country to stage the finals of the European Under-21 competition in May and June.

Bob Vaughan

AUSTRIA

Krankl takes on Fortuna Koln

FORMER Rapid and Barcelona player Hans Krankl has won the doubtful honour of following Toni Schumacher in taking up the coaching post at ailing Fortuna Koln of the German Second Division.

Krankl's career in management has not matched that of his playing days, and club owner 'Jean' Loring's choice could be seen as somewhat bizarre. On the other hand stranger things have happened at the club,

who have been longer in the Bundesliga 2 than any other.

Krankl, who previously had a spell in charge at Salzburg, has nothing to lose. His new club have won only 15 points from 17 games.

He was nevertheless surprised by the very considerable media interest in his arrival in the Rhineland.

Krankl has not commented on the squad and is taking his time to assess what has to be done, but there is no doubting it is a very tough job.

Bob Vaughan

BULGARIA

Mladenov succeeds Dimitrov

THE FEDERATION have appointed 43-year-old Stoicho Mladenov to lead the national team. The former Bulgarian international, who won 65 caps and scored 24 goals for his country, was previously in charge of the Under-21s.

Mladenov succeeds Dimitar Dimitrov, who resigned in December to take over at Levski Sofia. Dimitar Alexiev, coach of Belasitsa Petrich, is now in charge of the Under-21s.

Money problems are hitting hard on the domestic scene. CSKA have ever-diminishing financial support from their military backers, while FC Lovech are finding it tough having lost the sponsorship of Litex, which helped take the club to two titles and the qualifying rounds of the Champions League.

Bob Vaughan

POLAND

Matysek heads 'Oscar' winners

POLAND's players, often criticised this season, decided to award the first Football Oscars among themselves, in 10 categories.

Bayer Leverkusen keeper Adam Matysek was named Footballer of the Year, Legia Warsaw coach Franciszek Smuda was Best Manager, and Legia defender Jacek Zielinski took the Best Player in the Domestic League award.

The chairmen of the First and Second Division clubs have founded the so-called Autonomic Polish League, which will manage domestic competitions from next season, after signing an agreement with the FA. "Our clubs need more money, need to be better organised, and need to improve the level of Polish football," declared Witold Knychalski, the general secretary, who is now looking for sponsorship deals.

Many clubs are in a very difficult financial situation: one, eighth-placed Stomil Olsztyn, have withdrawn from the second part of the season because of huge money problems.

A Turkish firm, the Reform Company, has become the new owner of Pogon Szczecin, and former national coach Janusz Wojcik is to act as an adviser. The Turks plan to reinforce the team and "build a European club in Szczecin".

Dariusz Kurowski

Worthy winner...Vladimir Labant, Slovakia's Player of the Year

Pro-file Sasa Ilic

Yugoslav starlet making a late bid for Euro 2000

YUGOSLAVIA national coach Vujadin Boskov must have had young Partizan Belgrade midfielder Sasa Ilic in mind when he spoke recently of making an imminent raid on the Under-21s for some fresh-faced additions to his senior squad.

With the likes of Dragan Stojkovic and Dejan Savicevic past their prime, the Yugoslavs definitely need new blood, and 22-year-old Ilic, a product of Partizan's excellent youth scheme, is just one of several home-based high-flyers with the ability to play for their country before too long.

The Yugoslav League continues to be a deep reservoir of youthful talent. Obilic schemers Nikola Lazetic and Dragan Sarac, Partizan forward Mateja Kezman and midfielder Vladimir Ivic, defender Ivan Dudic of Red Star Belgrade, and Vojvodina utility man Jovan Tanasijevic are all being tipped for an extended run in the full international arena.

But it is the uncapped Ilic who has knocked loudest on Boskov's door in recent months. He has been in superb form in central midfield as his club battle with Obilic for the title – and not only with regard to his playmaking. His 13 goals before Christmas made him Partizan's top scorer.

Boskov promptly included Ilic in a strong Yugoslav squad for winter friendlies against Canary Islands and Catalonia XIs.

The signs appear good for a well-timed late run into the reckoning for Euro 2000. "I think it's only a matter of time before Ilic becomes a full international," says Partizan president Nenad Bjekovic. "He has the class to make the grade at the highest level and would not be out of place beside men such as Mihajlovic, Mijatovic and Stankovic.

"The national team's rather average performances in the Euro 2000 qualifiers proved that the side desperately needed rejuvenation. And Dejan Stankovic isn't the only high-quality young Yugoslav player. Ilic and a number of other good prospects have to be incorporated."

Despite Ilic's best efforts, Partizan have suffered their share of disappointments this term, failing to qualify for the Champions League after defeat by Moscow Spartak and losing to Leeds in the first round of the UEFA Cup. But a shot at international football and a Euro 2000 ticket will be more than adequate compensation for one of the country's brightest young things.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Partizan Belgrade
Country Yugoslavia
Born December 30, 1977, in Belgrade
Honours Yugoslav League 1997, 1999; Yugoslav Cup 1998

Saviola takes top prize

Eric Weil on the Americas annual awards

JAVIER SAVIOLA, the 18-year-old River Plate striker who finished top scorer in Argentina's opening championship, was voted the Americas' 1999 Player of the Year in a poll conducted by Uruguayan newspaper *El Pais*.

More than 400 journalists from 57 countries (26 American and 31 European) were polled.

Saviola gained 55 votes, 10 more than Paraguay defender Francisco Arce, with another Argentinian, Juan Riquelme, third on 42.

Other leading nominations were Jose Luis Chilavert (Paraguay), 36 votes, Ivan Cordoba (Colombia) 33, Alex (Brazil) 28, Pablo Aimar (Argentina) and Vampeta (Brazil) 23, Freddy Rincon (Colombia) and Ronaldinho (Brazil) 13.

Palmeiras' Luis Felipe Scolari was named top coach with 39 votes, followed by Carlos Bianchi (Boca Juniors) 34, and Brazil national coach Wanderley Luxemburgo on 29.

The Americas All-Star team was as follows: Chilavert (Paraguay), Arce (Paraguay), Samuel (Argentina), Ivan Cordoba (Colombia), Vampeta (Brazil), Alex (Brazil), Riquelme (Argentina), Rincon (Colombia), Aimar (Argentina), Ronaldinho (Brazil), Saviola (Argentina).

Continental choice...Javier Saviola

Men in the news

Kempes rises to the challenge

MARIO KEMPES, Argentina's 1978 World Cup top scorer, finally hit it off in Bolivia after having coached in countries as far flung as Spain, Albania, Sweden and Venezuela.

In Bolivia, he took on The Strongest at a time when they were fighting relegation and players were not getting paid. Kempes needed a job and likes a challenge.

At one stage the players went on strike and were dismissed, but later taken back although they were still not getting paid. Kempes managed to instil some fighting spirit and the team not only avoided relegation, but also won the closing championship.

"In spite of that, the economic situation hasn't improved much," says Kempes. "The players are still owed three months' salaries and the club owe me a lot of money."

As a consequence he intends to move on to a Chinese club, who, he claims, are offering him £500,000 a season. "I would love to coach in Argentina," Kempes says, "but they have never taken any notice of me."

ROQUE SANTA CRUZ of Bayern Munich was voted Paraguayan player of 1999 in a poll conducted by national newspaper *ABC Color*. Francisco Arce and Carlos Gamarra were second and third, but goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert was only sixth this time.

PABLO BENGOECHEA, captain of Uruguay's Penarol, was suspended for three months by CONMEBOL for failing a drugs test after the Mercosur Cup semi-final second leg against Flamengo of Brazil. His urine sample contained an enormous amount of caffeine, a constituent of mate tea, which is very popular in Uruguay. Bengoechea has been warned about his habit of drinking up to four litres a day, but says he finds it difficult to stop.

SANDRO BAYLON, voted Peru's player of 1999, has been killed in a car crash. Baylon, 22, of Alianza Lima, was captain of the Under-23 team and was due to play in the Olympic qualifying tournament.

JOSE TENORIO, found guilty of using false documents to qualify to play for Ecuador's Under-20 team, was the fifth player to be banned for life in 1999 by the Ecuadorian FA.

RAMON DELGADO, an Argentinian international striker, has left Racing Club for Boca Juniors, who paid £1.8m for 42 per cent of his contract. Boca will have to find another £465,000 if he is sold abroad or £220,000 if he stays at Boca.

Eric Weil

Top man...Roque Santa Cruz

BRAZIL

Palmeiras pay price for defeats

PALMEIRAS and main sponsor Parmalat have decided to cut costs following the club's defeats in the finals of the Mercosur Cup and World Club Cup, by Flamengo and Manchester United respectively, and a lack of success in domestic competition in 1999.

Ten leading players have been put up for transfer and Parmalat expect to save £230,000 a month in sponsorship.

Palmeiras, who dominated Brazilian soccer during the last decade and are the holders of the Libertadores Cup, will start next season with an entirely new team which, according to club officials, will include many juniors from the lower divisions.

CBF president Ricardo Teixeira has said that clubs will lose millions of dollars when TV contracts are re-negotiated, because the national championship lost credibility following the court case in December over the time at which the Final should kick off.

Fluminense, one of Rio de Janeiro's big clubs, who recently crashed from the national

championship's First to Third Division, have won promotion back to the Second.

Corinthians, the inaugural World Club champions, received more honours when Edilson and Oswaldo de Oliveira were named by the CBF as best player and coach of the 1999 season.

Argentina defender Mario Galvan, a stalwart for losing national championship finalists Atletico Mineiro, will play for Santos next season. Mineiro refused to pay the £1.1million requested by Galvan to renew his contract, which he owns.

Eric Weil

SOUTH AMERICAN CLUB COMPETITIONS

America - at last

AMERICA CALI, four times losing finalists in the Libertadores Cup, finally won an international trophy when taking the **MERCONORTE CUP**, which comprises leading teams from Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela.

Colombian supremacy in the region was confirmed in the second successive all-Colombian Final, in which America beat Independiente Medellin.

America played a reserve team in the first leg, which they lost 2-1, because they had chosen to concentrate on the imminent two-legged Final of the Colombian championship. However, after losing the domestic decider to Medellin's Atletico Nacional, America then put their full team into the Merconorte second leg three days later. This they won 1-0, and took the resulting penalty shoot-out 5-3.

This year's enlarged Toyota-sponsored **LIBERTADORES CUP** has 32 clubs, with the winner taking an accumulative prize of £3.2million. This compares favourably with the £3.1m for the Mercosur Cup winners.

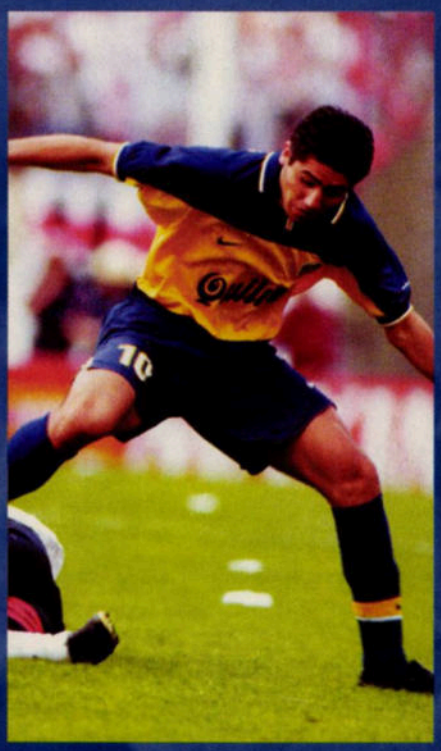
Clubs playing at home in the first round groups will receive £100,000 per match (apart from gate money), £300,000 for the home leg of their second round knockout match, £333,000 in the quarter-finals and £430,000 in the semis. The Final winners will receive £1.3m and the losers £330,000, plus prize money from Toyota of £550,000 and £218,000 respectively.

Eric Weil

● *For the Libertadores Cup draw, see World Service, starting page 35.*

Pro-file Juan Riquelme

The man most likely to fill Maradona's shoes



EVER SINCE Diego Maradona left Argentina to join Barcelona in 1981, the domestic game has been looking for his successor. There have been many pretenders and there still are, but the one most likely to fill his shoes – on the playing field at least – is 21-year-old Juan Roman Riquelme. And there are many similarities.

Like Maradona, Riquelme was born to a poor family with many children – he is the oldest of 10 – and was discovered playing on waste ground in his native San Fernando. After a spell at Argentinos Juniors, Riquelme moved to Boca Juniors, where he wears the No 10 shirt, just like the hero of 1986.

He is an outstanding playmaker who also scores goals; and his agent is Marcos Franchi, who managed Maradona for years.

The biggest difference between the two players is that while Maradona always had a lot to say, Riquelme talks virtually only with his feet. It is very difficult to get an interview with him as he is very shy, particularly of the media.

But there is no doubting his ability – Boca would not be half the team without him, even if he does not stand out like a Martin Palermo, for example.

Argentinian journalists thought so too when they gave him their Gold Ball award as the best player of the 1998-99 season...and forced him to talk. "I didn't expect this prize," said Riquelme. "It makes me very happy, but it should be shared with my Boca team-mates who made it possible, and I dedicate it to my daughter, Florencia. I also feel lucky that things happened so fast for me. Apart from having been champion with Boca, I was also lucky to be picked for the national team."

Riquelme has also stood out because of his attitude to a potential move abroad. The vast majority of players would relish the chance, but some time ago he refused to contemplate a move to Real Madrid, who had signalled their interest. "I felt I was not ready to play in Europe," says Riquelme. "Today things have changed as I've gained a lot of experience and if a big opportunity comes along, I'll see. I wouldn't mind playing for Barcelona but in my heart I'd like to play for Boca always."

Franchi puts it differently. "His intention is to have a good long-term contract with Boca Juniors and stay with them, even at the cost of earning a bit less than in Europe," he says. "So it all depends on Boca president Mauricio Macri, with whom I will be talking soon."

Whatever the outcome, it cannot be denied that Riquelme's monthly salary of £3,700 simply does not compare with what he could earn in Europe.

Riquelme, who is contracted to Boca until the end of 2001, now lives in the rural village of Don Toruato with his wife, Anabella, and daughter. He had first moved to a flat in Belgrano but could not get used to living in town. He prefers the calm of the countryside even if it means a longer journey when the team train at Casa Amarilla next to the stadium.

He says: "When I was first asked to go to Argentinos Juniors, I was a bit afraid at first, but finally I was urged to take the opportunity. I was a bit small and they did not have a lot of confidence in me. But I grew taller quickly and began playing in the Argentinos Juniors 9th division" – just as Maradona had done.

Under Carlos Bilardo, Riquelme made his First Division debut for Boca on November 10, 1996, when just 18, and immediately shone. But the next coach, Hector Veira, did not think so much of him and he was not a regular first-teamer – despite the fact that Riquelme was playing brilliantly for Argentina's Under-20 team, who won both the South American and World Championships in 1997.

He has not made the same impact on the full national team and has earned only six caps, but is bound to make his mark sooner or later, and coach Marcelo Bielsa has him constantly in mind.

Some critics say he is slow, to which Riquelme responds: "I feel the game in a certain way and I don't find any reason to change. But I still have a lot to learn and I want to improve every day to give the fans more to cheer about. But it's not easy to play for Boca, because the fans expect you to win every match."

Eric Weil

Fact file

Club Boca Juniors
Country Argentina
Born June 24, 1978, San Fernando
Previous club Argentinos Juniors
International caps 6
Honours Argentinian opening championship 1998; closing championship 1999

In demand...the USA's Claudio Reyna

Club v country: the latest instalment

GOLD CUP

HERE IT comes again: the Gold Cup, the tournament that so upset European clubs two years ago. So be warned, Europe, there are 12 countries involved, and quite a few of your players will be needed for national duty.

This is the championship of the Football Confederation (formerly CONCACAF), which takes in North and Central America and the Caribbean area. When the 1998 version was staged, the then English Premiership boss Peter Leaver slagged it off as a tournament played "simply for the money". But there are grudging signs that European attitudes may be changing. Rangers coach Dick Advocaat, bitching (what else?) about the possibility of losing the USA's Claudio Reyna for the Gold Cup, referred to the games as "friendlies" – still inaccurate, but a bit more prestigious than merely money games.

Talking of money: general admission prices are hardly exorbitant, ranging from £10 to £13 for the first-round double-headers. Nor is the prize money exactly overwhelming – not by European standards anyway. The total purse is £412,000, with £100,000 going to the winners. Last time round, they were Mexico, who beat the USA 1-0 in the Final.

Quite possibly the same nations will end up in the 2000 decider, Mexico being the strongest team in the region, with the USA not far behind and having the advantage of being the host nation. Though there is some question about that. The 1998 Final drew an overwhelmingly pro-Mexican crowd of over 91,000 to Los Angeles Coliseum. The US players, bewildered at being greeted with hostility in their own country, complained that the fans yelled abuse and threw garbage at them.

By most standards, the event two years ago was a big success. The one area that let things down was the weather, with El Nino dumping torrents of rain on several games.

The (hopefully much drier) 2000 Gold Cup kicks off in Miami on February 12, with the Final in Los Angeles on February 27. It will feature three guest teams – Peru, South Korea and Colombia.

The full line-up is: Group A: Jamaica, Colombia, Honduras (Miami). Group B: USA, Peru, Haiti (Miami). Group C: Mexico, Guatemala, Trinidad & Tobago (San Diego/Los Angeles). Group D: Costa Rica, South Korea, Canada (San Diego/Los Angeles).

Paul Gardner

GOLD CUP THE SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND

Feb 12: USA v Haiti; Colombia v Jamaica (Miami)

Feb 13: Costa Rica v Canada; Mexico v Trinidad & Tobago (San Diego)

Feb 14: Jamaica v Honduras; Haiti v Peru (Miami)

Feb 15: Trinidad & Tobago v Guatemala; South Korea v Canada (Los Angeles)

Feb 16: Honduras v Colombia; Peru v USA (Miami)

Feb 17: South Korea v Costa Rica; Mexico v Guatemala (Los Angeles)

QUARTER-FINALS

Feb 19: Gp B winners v Gp A runners-up (Miami) 1

Feb 19: Gp A winners v Gp B runners-up (Miami) 2

Feb 20: Gp D winners v Gp C runners-up (San Diego) 3

Feb 20: Gp C winners v Gp D runners-up (San Diego) 4

SEMI-FINALS

Feb 23: Winners 1 v Winners 2 (San Diego)

Feb 24: Winners 3 v Winners 4 (Los Angeles)

FINAL

Feb 27: Los Angeles

Striking Gold...Mexico take the Cup in 1998

Money rolls in for Necaxa

MEXICO

THE Necaxa players and officials were rightly rewarded for an excellent performance in the new World Club Championship. Their third place was worth £1.3million, all of which went to those actively involved.

Sadly the club's success is likely to be the last such performance, because their squad now largely comprises veterans. The only new face is Christian Montecinos, though he proved his worth in Brazil.

Another problem for Necaxa is that the domestic opposition appears to be getting stronger. The Summer League kicked off in mid-January with a double bang – big away victories for two refashioned teams. America won 5-0 at Toros Neza, Tigres UNL beat Atlas 4-0, and both are among the title favourites, along with Cruz Azul, Monterrey, Toluca and Santos Laguna.

The national squad started preparations for the Carlsberg (Hong Kong) and Gold Cup tournaments with victories in two friendly games. First they beat a very good Iranian side 2-1, then won 3-1 against a team advertised as Romania, which turned out to be Rapid Bucharest. However, the Mexican FA is keen that the latter game should be recognised as an official international, if only for the sake of Claudio Suarez. His caps total, including one for the 'Romania' match, is now 128, more than any other Mexican in history.

Carlos Ramirez

Fine contribution...Montecinos played with credit in Brazil

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Al Ahly's run ends at 48

Mark Gleeson rounds up the news from across the continent

Over to Portugal...Abdelsatar Sabry has moved to Benfica

AL AHLY's 48-match unbeaten run in the **EGYPTIAN** League ended with a 2-1 defeat by Zamalek in the traditional Cairo derby. It was a perfect start for German coach Otto Pfister, who has just taken charge of Zamalek.

The defeat also ended a run of eight successive wins for Al Ahly, but they still top the table by a single point from Zamalek, with Al Ittihad and Ismailia also in contention.

Al Ahly twins Hossam and Ibrahim Hassan both went on strike after the defeat, claiming coach Rainer Zobel was treating them like children.

Meanwhile, Egyptian international Abdelsatar Sabry has moved from PAOK Salonika in Greece to Portugal's Benfica, becoming the fourth African in their squad.

Elsewhere in **NORTH AFRICA**, **TUNISIA**'s Esperance have loaned Nigerian international striker Gabriel Okolosi to Al Ahli of Tripoli in Libya. Meanwhile, the club lost their 100 per cent record in the League after 13 matches, when held to a goalless draw by JS Kairouan. Esperance still lead by four points from Etoile Sahel.

Frenchman Serge Deveze, a former national team coach of Guinea, has taken over at AS Marsa, who are bottom of the Tunisian League. He replaces Armand Forcherio.

Faouzi Benzerti is another coach to be sacked, after Club Africain's slump in form. He has been replaced by Pole Anton Piechniczek.

Former Mouloudia Alger striker Rafik Saifi has been named as **ALGERIA**'s Footballer of the Year for 1999, even though he moved in mid-year to Troyes in France. Saifi finished comfortably ahead of Farid Ghazi and Abdelhamid Rahmouni in the annual poll conducted by *Echibek* magazine.

CR Belouizdad lead the Algerian championship race by five points from Entente Setif.

Unheralded Hassania Agadir are the leaders as the **MOROCCAN** championship approaches the halfway mark. However, defending champions Raja Casablanca have several games in hand after their participation in the World Club Championship in Brazil.

CENTRAL AFRICA

US BITAM won the 39th edition of the **GABON** Cup with a 2-1 defeat of Aigles Vert in the Final in Libreville. The team are coached by Emmanuel Kunde, who played for Cameroon in the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

CAMEROONIAN international forward Alphonse Tchami has been loaned by German club Hertha Berlin to Al Wasl in the UAE.

Former **MALAWIAN** international winger Clifton Msiya has died after a short illness at the age of 37. He played in the 1984 African Nations Cup finals and was Malawi's Footballer of the Year in 1987, before leaving to play for Jomo Cosmos in South Africa.

Msiya reportedly made his national team debut at the age of 14, although this has never been independently confirmed.

Civo have a one-point lead over Red Lions in Malawi's Super League, with third-placed Bata Bullets also in the championship chase.

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EAST AFRICA

TANZANIAN FA president Muhidin Ndolanga and secretary-general Ismail Aden Rage are being investigated over allegations of fraud.

The annual East and Central African Senior Club Championship in **SUDAN** has been put on hold because of the civil war in the country. Uganda is on stand-by to host the event, originally scheduled for January.

St George are the leaders in **ETHIOPIA**, with a four-point gap over second-placed Banks.

MAURITIAN League champions Vascoas-Phoenix FC have asked national team coach France L'Aiguille to help them with their African Champions League campaign this season.

WEST AFRICA

HOME SIDE ASFA Yennega of **BURKINA FASO** won the West African Football Union Cup, beating favourites Stade Abidjan of the Ivory Coast 3-2 in the Final in Ouagadougou.

This was the first win by a club from Burkina Faso in the long-standing tournament. Stade were the first winners of the WAFU Cup 23 years ago. The 1998 runners-up, JS Tenere of Niger, defeated Etoile de Guinea 3-1 to take third place.

Salif Keita, the first winner of the African Footballer of the Year award, has been named **MALI**'s player of the century by the country's football federation. Keita played in France, Spain, Portugal and the USA in the 1970s and 1980s.

Djoliba beat Stade Malien 1-0 with a goal from Tenema Ndiaye to take the Malian Super Cup. AS Mande are the leaders in the Malian championship, two points ahead of Stade Malien.

NIGERIAN defender Yusuf Umar, who was deported from Egypt in 1993 after testing HIV positive, has died aged 33. Umar played in Egypt for Alexandria FC but was not allowed to compete in Nigeria's professional League after his return to the country.

Katsina United are the early leaders in the Nigerian League, and the only side still with a 100 per cent record.

Aliou Sidi Badra, 1998 Footballer of the Year in **IVORY COAST**, has returned to play for ASEC Abidjan after a season in Saudi Arabia.

Champions Africa Sports have signed Ibrahima Diomande (ASEC Abidjan), Moussa Timite (Stade Abidjan) and Simplice Djohore (Sewe) to strengthen their squad for this year's African Champions League.

Veteran Ivorian striker Joel Tiehi, a winner of the African Nations Cup in 1992, announced his retirement from international soccer on the eve of the 2000 finals, despite being in contention for a place in the squad.

Abubakari Ouattara, former coach of **GHANAIAN** glamour club Asante Kotoko, has been arrested on fraud charges after allegedly taking money from fans seeking to travel to the USA for last year's Women's World Cup and then not organising the trips.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

ANGOLAN clubs Rangol and Benfica de Luanda have merged, and the new club will receive support from Benfica in Portugal, the former colonial power.

SOUTH AFRICA's Under-23 team beat Mozambique's seniors 3-2 in Maputo, with a late winner from Stanton Fredericks. The match was a warm-up for South Africa's Olympic Games qualifying campaign.

Bruce Grobbelaar has returned to coaching in the country, taking charge of second-from-bottom SuperSport United.

SWAZI internationals Maxwell Zikalala and John Mdluli were refused entry into Israel, where they had trials arranged at Maccabi Irony Ashdod. The pair had been to Israel a few months before and were returning for a second set of tests, but were turned back by immigration officials because they did not have permits.

The entire executive of the **ZAMBIAN** FA has resigned, ending a long-standing impasse with the government and opening the way for an injection of funds for the cash-strapped association.

Back in charge...Grobbelaar

Pro-file Gerald Asamoah

Ghanaian gunning for a place in Germany's squad

AS THE African Nations Cup finals reach a climax, one of the continent's young stars is absent, seeking to find his international fortune elsewhere.

Gerald Asamoah's hopes of an international career rest not with Ghana, where he was born, but rather with Germany, the country where he was raised. A request for German citizenship, based on the 21-year-old's long period of residence, is in the bureaucratic system and has the support of Germany's national coach, Erich Ribbeck.

"Asamoah is a young player of great potential," he said recently. "I'm backing his request for citizenship. He's a possible candidate for a striker's position in my squad."

For the player there is no question of where his loyalties lie, despite the fact that he accepted a call from Ghana earlier this year. He sat only on the bench and therefore did not endanger his chances of playing in German colours.

"I've lived in Germany since I was nine and I feel I'm a German," he says. "I have lots of friends and feel I've been accepted. I applied for a German passport long ago and hope that I'll get it soon."

That would leave him free to play for Germany, where his form in the Bundesliga this season has been remarkable: a year ago he was suffering from a heart condition that threatened to end his career. But just like Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu, now playing in England with Arsenal, Asamoah has put the problem behind him and made a strong impression at Schalke, who spent almost £1million to sign him from Second Division Hannover at the start of the season. "I spent a lot of time in church praying when the doctors said I might not be able to play again," he says.

Having overcome that hurdle it has been full steam ahead for Asamoah, now a fixture in the heart of Schalke fans.

Yet despite the forward's affinity with Germany, there is no doubt that some of his heart belongs to Africa, too. "My grandmother still lives near Kumasi, and Ghana is a beautiful land, the best place for holidays."

Asamoah says he has modelled his game on compatriot Tony Yeboah. "I always marvelled at his goals, and we both come from the Ashanti people. It was great to meet him, and now we have regular contact."

Yeboah, currently with Hamburg, has amassed close to 100 goals in his two spells in the Bundesliga.

"He's an example to me, an idol, and I hope my path will follow his," says Asamoah.

Schalke surely hope so too.

Mark Gleeson

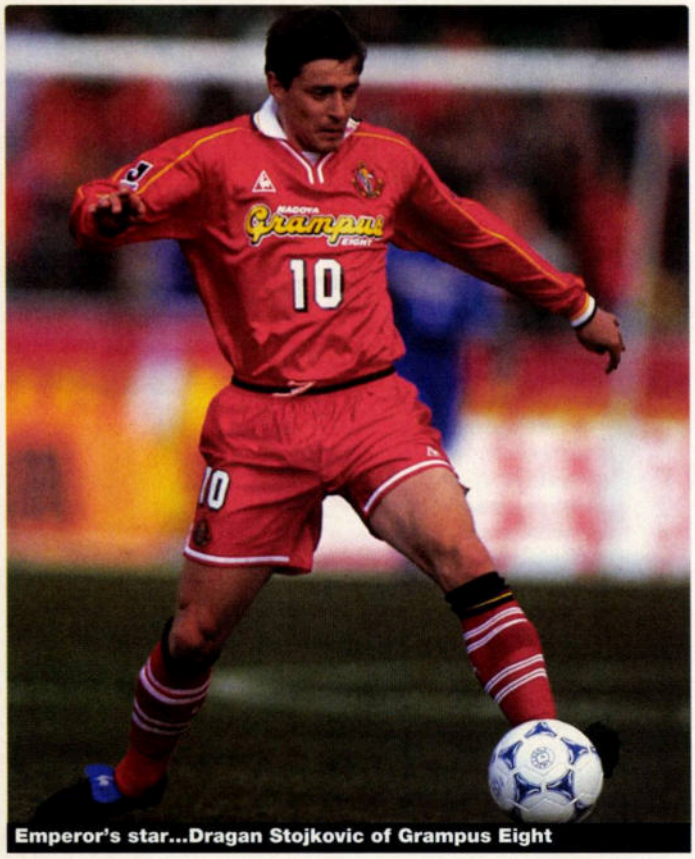
Fact file

Club Schalke (Ger)
Country Ghana
Born October 3, 1978
Previous clubs Werder Hannover (Ger), Hannover 96 (Ger)

JAPAN

Grampus crowned in Emperor's Cup

Stojkovic inspires Nagoya to end-of-season glory after poor start



Emperor's star...Dragan Stojkovic of Grampus Eight

NAGOYA Grampus Eight capped a remarkable finish to the Japanese season by beating Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2-0 in the Emperor's Cup Final. The club spent big at the start of the season, bringing in three internationals – keeper Seigo Narazaki, midfielder (now captain) Motohiro Yamaguchi and striker Wagner Lopes – then spectacularly failed to deliver.

After a poor First Stage in the J.League, Grampus had an even worse start to the Second, slumping to three defeats and a draw in their first five matches.

Then former Kashima Antlers manager Joao Carlos took over, and Grampus won 10 games on the trot to end second in the table, just a hair's breadth away from overhauling Shimizu S-Pulse.

Their winning ways continued in the Emperor's Cup, in which they were given the hardest possible passage. They beat 1998 League champions Antlers 2-1, 1999 champions Jubilo Iwata 1-0, and fast-improving Kashiwa Reysol 2-0.

Against Sanfrecce, Dragan Stojkovic turned on a sparkling display, scoring one and setting up the other for Lopes.

Preparations for the 2000 season are now under way, and a string of assistant coaches have been promoted to manage clubs. Hiroshi Soejima takes over from Belgian Rene Desaereye at Cerezo Osaka, Nestor Omar Piccoli replaces Yoshio Kikugawa at Avispa Fukuoka, and Brazilian Zeca, originally goalkeeping coach, comes in for Ikuo Matsumoto at Kawasaki Frontale. Kazuaki Saito, a former Frontale boss, takes over at Urawa Reds from Aad De Mos, and former national team captain and Verdy Kawasaki manager Hisashi Kato is now in charge at Shonan Bellmare (formerly Bellmare Hiratsuka).

The First Stage runs from March 11 until May 27, the Second from June 24 to November 26, with long breaks for the Sydney Olympics and the Asian Cup. The national team are also contesting the Carlsberg Cup in February, in which they face the Czech Republic, Mexico and hosts Hong Kong; join France, Argentina and Morocco at the King Hassan II tournament in Morocco in June; and host the Kirin Cup in the same month.

The J.League is planning a permanent switch to a winter season from 2002, World Cup year, kicking off in August and playing through to May.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

ROUND-UP

Bora goes to China

BORA MILUTINOVIC is the new national coach of **CHINA**, in succession to Englishman Bob Houghton. Milutinovic was sacked by New York/New Jersey MetroStars in October.

Five nations – Iran, Thailand, China, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia – have applied to host the 13th Asian Cup in 2004. The decision will be made in October.

The Asian confederation has declared 2000 as the year of Asian youth, and its 45 national FAs have been asked to draw up a long-term development programme.

In **INDIA** the Calcutta derby ended in a 1-0 win for Mohun Bagan over East Bengal. This put Mohun three points clear at the top.

Azam Mahmood

CROATIAN Josip Skoblar is the new manager of **LEBANON**. He replaces Egyptian coach Mahmoud Saad, sacked two months ago, but his contract lasts only until the end of the Asian Cup finals in October.

Al Faysali did the Double in **JORDAN** for the fourth time, topping the League table and then beating Al Wahadat in the Cup Final.

The match was a disappointment despite the presence of 15 internationals, and ended goalless. Al Faysali won 5-4 on penalties.

In **SYRIA**, newly-appointed national coach Dragoslav Sridovic has lined up eight warm-ups for the Asian Cup qualifiers. Their opponents are Red Star Belgrade (two games in Damascus), Kuwait (two games in Kuwait City), North Korea (two games in Damascus) and Jordan (two games; one in Damascus, one in Amman).

Al Wahda led the **UAE** table by one point after six weeks. Senegalese forward Bouri Lah's goal gave them all three points away to newly-promoted Al Emirates. The early pacesetters, Al Nasr, have slipped to sixth.

Al Ittihad remain the only unbeaten side in **QATAR**, having won four and drawn three of their seven matches. They are one point behind leaders Al Saad.

Qatar's national team were surprisingly beaten 2-0 at home by Iranian club Pirouzi.

Al Nassr of Riyadh regained first place in **SAUDI ARABIA** thanks to a 1-0 home win over Al Nijma, but Al Ittihad are two points behind with two games in hand.

Mohamed Chbaro

China role...Bora Milutinovic

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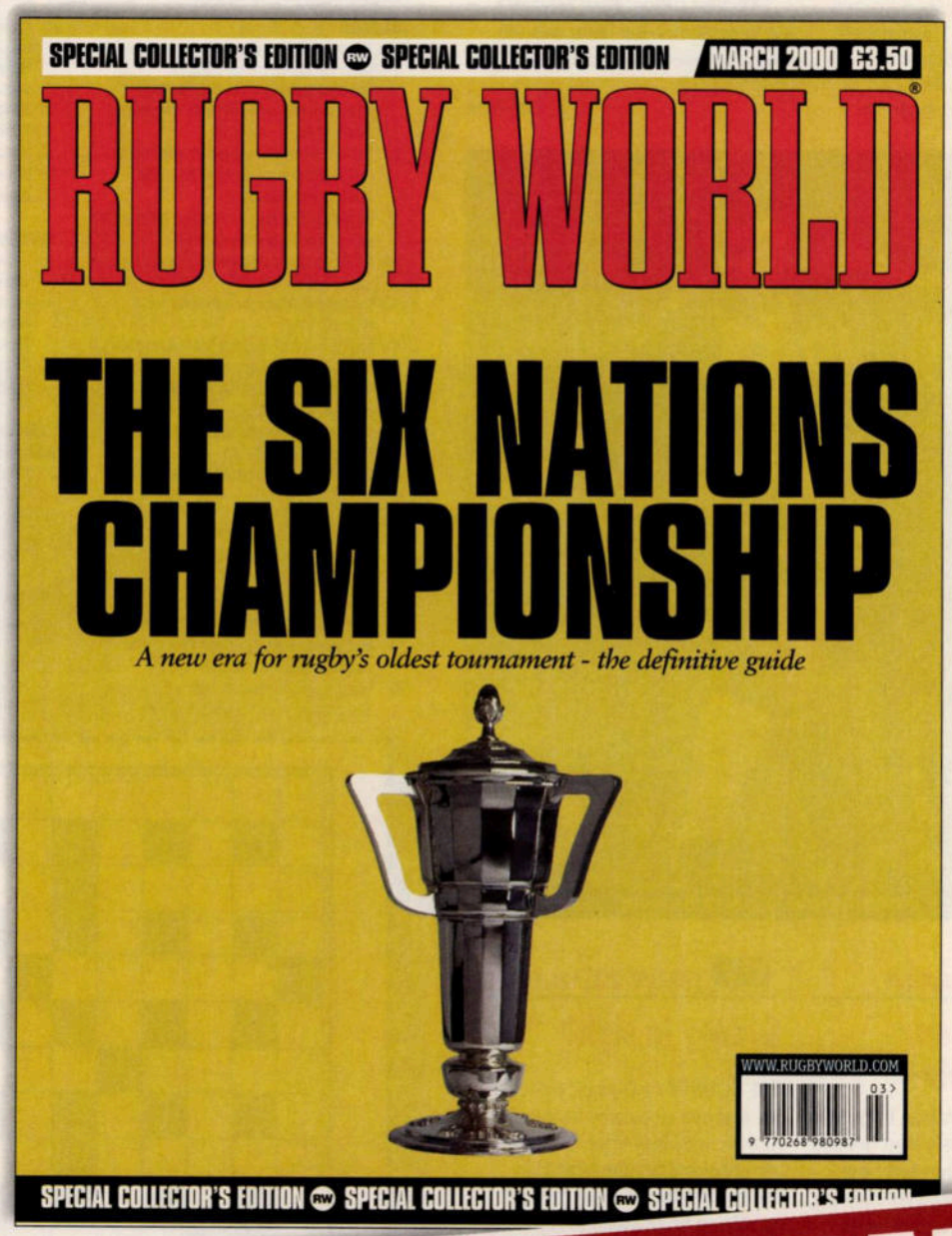

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Harry top of the poll

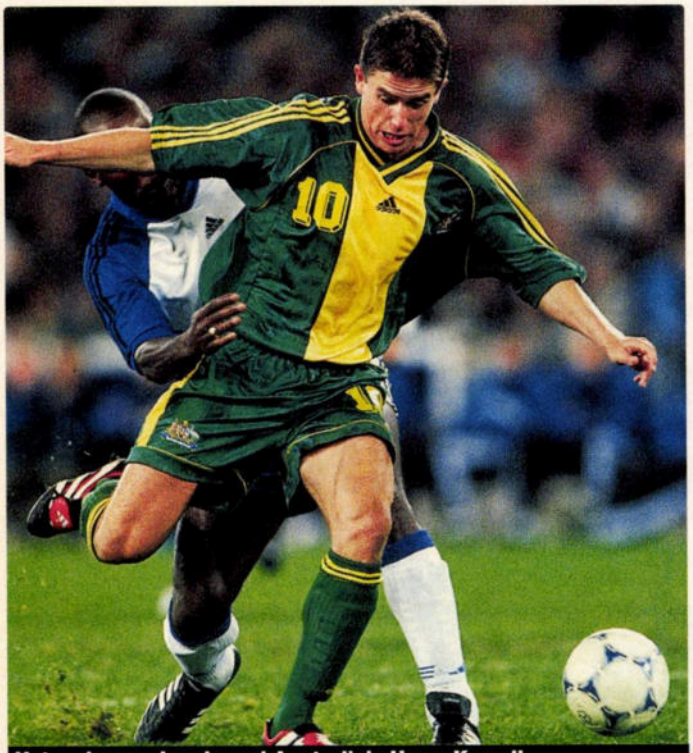
HARRY KEWELL has been named the 1999 Oceania Player of the Year, despite his appearances in the region during the year being restricted to two irrelevant exhibition games.

Kewell, often the subject of tugs of war between Soccer Australia and his club, Leeds United, finished well clear of Celtic's Mark Viduka.

Another Australian, Ned Zelic of 1860 Munich, was third, with the next three places being taken by New Caledonia-born Christian Karembeu (Real Madrid and France), Tony Vidmar (Rangers and Australia) and Mark Bosnich (Manchester United and Australia).

Michael Utting, New Zealand's Confederations Cup hero, was the only Oceania-based player to feature in the top 10.

Paul Moon



Vote winner...Leeds and Australia's Harry Kewell

AUSTRALIA

Olympic still on course for gold

SYDNEY OLYMPIC continue to be the National Soccer League's front runners despite the fact that they were not among the favourites when the season began. After 16 games, they were leading Perth Glory and Wollongong Wolves by a point, with Brisbane Strikers, Carlton Blues and Newcastle Breakers making up the top six.

Olympic's best-known players are occasional Australian international Brett Emerton and Chris Zoricich, a New Zealander with English League experience (at Leyton Orient). The club's support is drawn almost exclusively from Sydney's Greek community.

Paul Moon

NEW ZEALAND

Sydney in sight

THE COUNTRY's Olympic selection are just one step away from claiming a berth in Sydney after their 4-1 victory over Solomon Islands in the Final of the Oceania Olympic qualifying tournament in Auckland.

Paul Urlovic, the leading scorer during the last domestic season, was the Kiwis' hero. He had notched a hat-trick before the Solomons pulled a goal back through Richard Kiriau. However, any hopes of a comeback were killed when Urlovic crossed for Blair Scholar to complete the scoring.

Now only the fourth-best team from Africa's qualifying tournament stand between New Zealand and their first Olympic finals appearance.

Paul Moon

Win a pair of top-quality Mitre football boots

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Mitre has kindly donated a pair of top-quality football boots as first prize for this month's crossword. The first correct entry selected at random after March 10 will win the boots. Five runners-up will win a copy of *The World Soccer Dictionary of Football*.

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO: MARCH CROSSWORD, *World Soccer*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Please remember to include your shoe size.

ACROSS

1 Teenage Trelleborgs keeper who won a surprise move to Juve (8)
7 Founder members of the Football League now in the English Second Division (5)
8 Former Padova midfielder who came on as a sub for Parma in the 1999 UEFA Cup Final (5)
9 Sevilla's Uruguayan forward who was with Vicenza last season (5)
10 PSV and Ghana defender previously with Club Brugge (4)
13 Ex-Lodz right-back currently with Auxerre (4)
14 Republic of Ireland striker who plays his club football for Sunderland (5)
17 Nelson Acosta's Copa America 99 semi-finalists (5)
18 Flamengo midfield man lured to the Bernabeu in 1997 (5)
19 Spanish First Division new boys from Soria (8)

DOWN

1 Marseille's South African central defender (4)
2 League champions of Cyprus (10)
3 Colo Colo and Chile midfield stalwart (6)
4 Dutchman who coached Kyoto and Japan's national side (4)
5 Ivory Coast-born defender of Strasbourg and Monaco fame (6)
6 Yugoslav forward loaned last season by Atletico to Werder Bremen (10)
11 Nigerian midfielder who was a major signing for PSG in 1998 (6)
12 National side that features Filimonov, Khokhlov and Onopko (6)
15 Barcelona's former Lens defender (4)
16 Winners of Argentina's opening and closing championships in 1998-99 (4)

SEPTEMBER WINNERS

1st prize: James Ankers, Milton Green, Chester.
5 runners-up: Terry Ransome, Ipswich; Graham Caldwell, Renfrewshire; Nicholas Harvey, Liverpool; Michael Chin, Stamford, Lincs; David O'Shea, Co Cork.

JANUARY SOLUTION

ACROSS: 2 Milinovic, 6 Veron, 7 Kreek, 9 Cochin, 10 Fish, 12 Vonk, 14 Gerets, 17 Congo, 18 Pecze, 19 Evanilson.
DOWN: 1 Savicevic, 2 Maric, 3 Lundin, 4 Nikl, 5 Vieri, 8 Kihlstedt, 11 Kempes, 13 Nonda, 15 Ercan, 16 Toni.

JANUARY WINNERS

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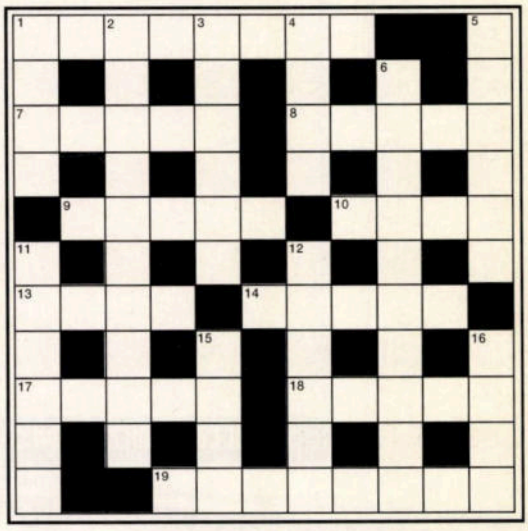
5 runners-up: Bill Thackray, Croydon; Iain Frame, Lanark, Scotland; Davy Hill, Barnsley; Mark Foster, Dunedin, New Zealand; Robert Allan, Gillingham, Kent.



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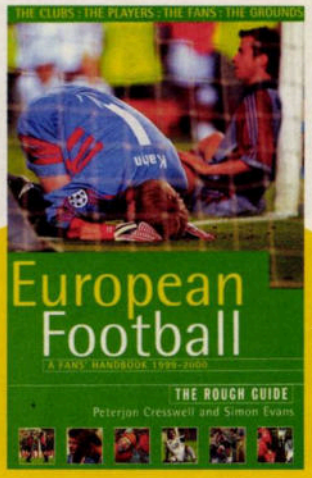

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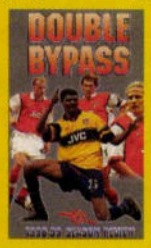

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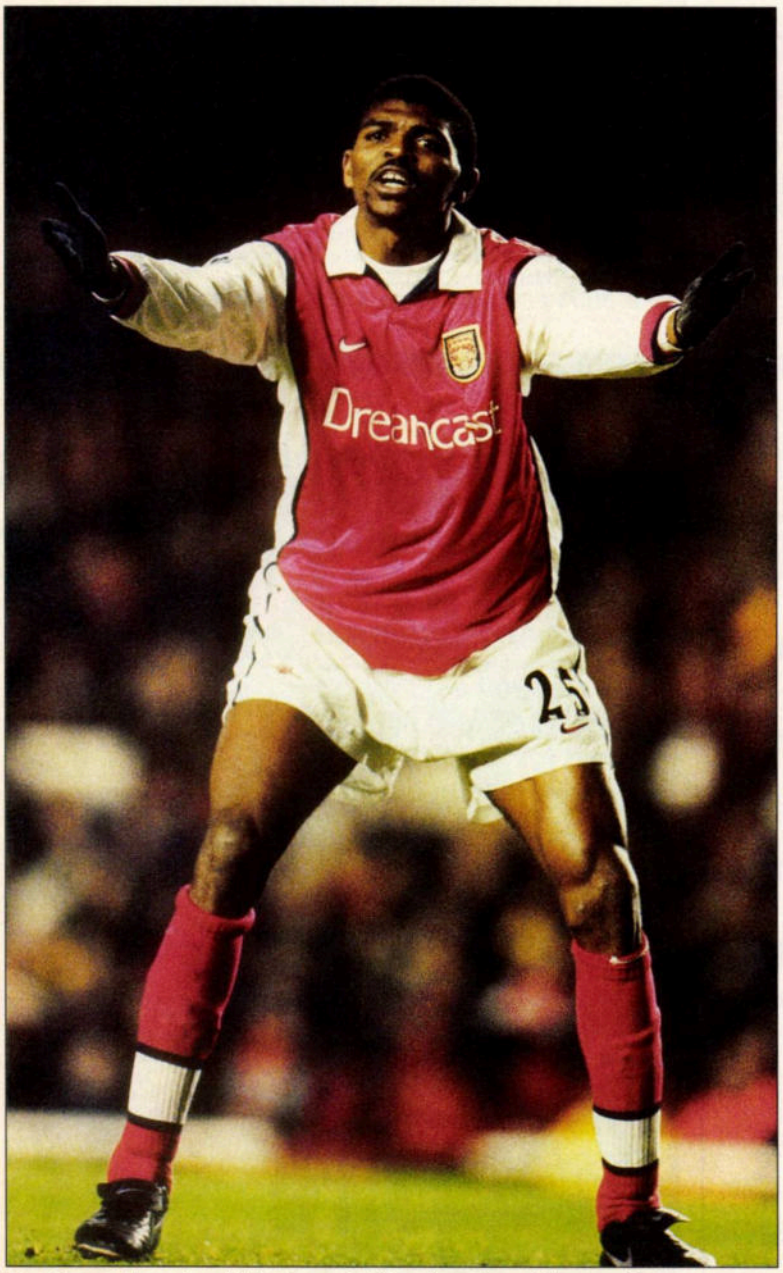
Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

An explosion on the horizon

'To stage such tournaments as the African Nations Cup in the middle of the European season can only be a form of provocation and a source of eventual trouble'

"OF COURSE," said Arsene Wenger. I'd just asked him, in the press conference that followed Arsenal's FA Cup draw with Leicester at Highbury, if he thought a time was coming when the big European clubs would be moved to withdraw from FIFA.

This was after what might be called the Kanu Fiasco, when Nigeria insisted on having the Arsenal forward in training for the African Nations Cup the full stipulated two weeks before it began. Arsenal had asked for one day's grace, so that he could play against Leicester.



Tug of war...Arsenal and Nigeria wanted Kanu's services at the same time

Not only were the Nigerians obdurate, but also they actually threatened – and a FIFA official deplorably supported them – to have Arsenal thrown out of the FA Cup were they to use Kanu, because he was ineligible!

In the event, marginally wiser counsels prevailed, and the Nigerians graciously gave their permission for Kanu to play. But Arsenal received the go-ahead only three hours before the game with Leicester kicked off, meaning that Wenger had made his tactical dispositions, and Kanu was thus obliged to start on the bench – and be badly missed.

What should happen, said Wenger, logically and wisely, was that if international teams took players away from their clubs for sustained periods, they should have to pay their wages for that period. The same point was cogently made when the fluent Leicester manager, Martin O'Neill, followed Wenger to the rostrum. Were such a system in force, he joked, you would find players catching the plane to their training camps at the very last moment.

Yet even this system, which seems perfectly logical and feasible, would not compensate a club for the loss of a key player at a potentially crucial time. Nor were Arsenal by any means the only English team to suffer. Coventry City had been assured by Morocco that their two excellent midfielders, Mustapha Hadji and Youssef Chippo, would be allowed to fly home from Nations Cup preparations to play in a Premiership game, returning afterwards to Africa. When push came to shove, however, the Moroccans went back on their offer, saying that they did not want to risk either player getting injured.

After the African Nations Cup comes the so-called Gold Cup, the CONCACAF affair, which means the calling up of such players as Kasey Keller from Rayo Vallecano in Spain and Wimbledon's Marcus Gayle.

When the Rangers manager, Dick Advocaat, heard that his clever little American midfielder, Claudio Reyna, was likely to be involved, his answer was curt and tough. In that case, he said, he would be looking to buy another midfield player to make up for Reyna's absence.

He who pays the piper traditionally calls the tune. A massive amount is now at stake, for better or worse, for the game's leading European clubs, who have every right to feel resentful. When I once suggested to Chelsea chairman Ken Bates that there was so much talent in Africa, he logically replied that there were far too many calls on African players. So Chelsea have only one, at least on a permanent contract, Nigerian international left-back Celestine Babayaro, who was duly called up for his country.

To stage such tournaments in the middle of the European season can only be a form of provocation and a source of eventual trouble. Defenders of those competitions rail against the selfishness of the big European clubs, who have suborned talent from football's third world. But African, South American and other non-European stars, and their clubs, are only too glad to enrich themselves by taking European money.

It is hardly the fault of the Europeans that South American football is in constant financial crisis, or that sub-Saharan Africa, such a cornucopia of human talent, is forever undermined by incompetence, authoritarianism and corruption. Watch for the explosion.

FA Cup fan...Martin Edwards

Wrong time, wrong place

WHAT'S now to be said of the clumsily named Club World Championship? Listen to Sepp Blatter, who has delighted us by saying that the future of football was feminine. He felt that the new tournament had been a great success.

Even some of our own journalists appeared to go native, to the farcical extent of eulogising an all-Brazilian Final which bored to extinction and which, unfortunately for such scribes, was shown in all its tedium on BBC television.

Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards is not my favourite person, any more than he is that of Alex Ferguson or United's fans, but I raised a silent cheer when, in Rio, he said he'd far rather have United at home competing for the FA Cup – which they were bullied by the Government and FA into deserting. (Criticism and abuse of United for abandoning that tournament still seem to be grotesquely unfair.)

True, Edwards was promptly contradicted by one of his own directors, Bobby Charlton, but Charlton has an interest to declare. He's part of the committee that traipses round the world trying to persuade people to support our bid for the 2006 World Cup. Yet Blatter declared in Rio at the end of the half-baked competition that United's participation in it would have no bearing on the ultimate choice.

As we all know, this was an utterly spurious tournament. Neither Brazilian team were properly qualified to take part. Nor were Real Madrid. To invite the likes of South Melbourne and Al Nassr was a poor joke. Only 1,000 spectators attended the United-South Melbourne affair in the Maracana stadium, which holds 80,000.

Moreover, it was sheer cruelty to footballers, sheer folly, to hold the tournament at the height of the Brazilian summer.

And what now of David Beckham? Another petulant foul, to follow the one he committed in Saint-Etienne in the 1998 World Cup, though this one, in Rio, was immeasurably more serious, a shocking thrust at hapless Necaxa player Hernan Milian's thigh, studs up.

Of course Beckham deserved to be sent off, and it was outrageous that Ferguson – expelled from the bench that day – should seek to defend him. The excuse that he had not at that point seen a video of the foul was fatuous and, in any case, he subsequently seemed unrepentant.

Life is not easy for Beckham, despite his immense wealth and plethora of expensive cars, and it had just been made potentially more difficult by his wife's silly statement on breakfast television that he was given to wearing her thong underwear.

Beckham already is subject to vicious, obscene abuse by rival fans whenever he plays away. Now, alas, it's bound to be intensified.

Tough time for Zola

IT IS HARD to understand why Chelsea manager Gianluca Vialli treated his compatriot Gianfranco Zola so insensitively on the occasion of the match against Spurs, dropping him without a word before or after the game.

When I asked Vialli why he had preferred the hapless Chris Sutton to Zola he replied that he knew it was going to be a physical game. But which Premiership match is not?

Zola must have thought of the time at Parma when, forced to play on the right flank, he looked up to see Mario Stanic sitting in the grandstand and knew that his hour had struck.

Lineker: a step up from Lynam

WHEN Des Lynam suddenly jumped ship at the start of this football season, though his BBC contract was still in force, there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. In fact, his replacement on *Match of the Day* by Gary Lineker has substantially improved the programme.

Of Lynam's prowess as that modern phenomenon, a television presenter – our new aristocracy, *pace* the Spice Girls – there can be no doubt. He is professional, urbane, charming and relaxed. Seated with Alan Hansen and Trevor Brooking, or Mark Lawrenson, he held the ring competently, but he had nothing of the remotest interest or insight to say himself. Why should he?

Lineker, by contrast, is a perfectly competent front man, but also an ex-player of international renown, with a deep knowledge of the game and a shrewd and substantial contribution to make to the programme. In this respect at least, the Beeb gained rather than lost from Lynam's defection.

Team talk...Lineker (left) with Brooking and Hansen

From the archives...

March 1993

LAZIO'S Giuseppe Signori ended the 1992-93 season at the top of the Serie A scoring charts, and had notched 17 of his total of 26 at the time *World Soccer* featured him on the cover. Inside, Paddy Agnew referred to the growing belief that the little forward was benefiting from divine intervention – off the pitch at least.

On a visit to the shrine of Padre Pio, a Franciscan monk and faith healer, Signori had the football shirt he was wearing blessed by one of the monks. Shortly afterwards, he was involved in a bad car crash but emerged unscathed. He was wearing the shirt at the time.

Signori's four-year contract with Lazio, worth some £1.5million, compared well with his first deal in football, at the regional club Leffe. There he earned just £285 a month and, on top of that, was required to mend the president's TV and radio when called upon.

Signori's goals in 1992-93 could not prevent Milan from running away with the Italian title, and they also proved unstoppable in the group stage of the Champions League.

Witness to their power was PSV keeper Hans Van Breukelen, whose side were beaten home and away by the Milanese. In an interview with Keir Radnedge he raised the alarm: "They use 4-4-2 without a sweeper so they can press forward all the time."

In another interview, Radnedge asked the then FIFA general secretary, Sepp Blatter, about potential changes in the game. The first mentioned – introducing three points for a win at the World Cup – came to pass the following year. However, another Blatter baby – the kick-in, which, according to him, would "help create more excitement in the penalty box" – has been, well, kicked into touch.

On the South American pages, Brian Homewood reported on a Brazilian version of the kick-in. Fluminense had narrowly lost the Copa Brasil Final to Internacional, and the players were so outraged that the referee had not added on enough injury time that they began pushing him and laying into the riot police.

"The fighting continued next day," wrote Homewood, "when Fluminense players bumped into the referee on their flight back to Rio. He was forced to get off and take the next plane."

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